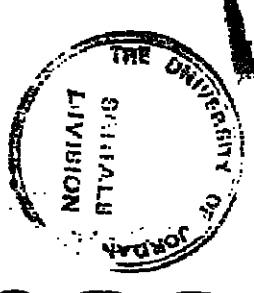


Jordan Times

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2 Somalis killed in Mogadishu shootout

NAIROBI (AFP) — Two Somali civilian bystanders have been killed and three others wounded during a shootout between U.N. troops and Somali gunmen in Mogadishu, a U.N. military spokesman said here Friday. Major Rick McDonald of the United Nations Operation Somalia (UNOSOM) told AFP on telephone from the Somali capital that the incident was sparked off when several Somalis tried to enter the U.N. compound in Mogadishu and were refused entry for lack of identification Thursday. Maj. McDonald said that the Somalis left, only to return later with armed gunmen who opened fire on UNOSOM security forces manning the gate. "The U.N. peacekeepers returned fire in self-defence, but unfortunately two Somali bystanders were killed and three others wounded," he said. There were no casualties on the U.N. side, he added. In another incident Friday, Mr. McDonald said, U.N. peacekeepers exchanged gunfire with a group of armed Somalis who tried to hijack a UNISOM vehicle in Baidoa, northwest of the Somali capital.

Israel fires missiles at Lebanese ridge

NABATIYEH (R) — Israeli forces fired three surface-to-surface missiles into a hill in a guerrilla-held ridge in South Lebanon, security sources said on Friday. A radio station run by an Israeli-backed militia confirmed what it said was the first ever use of the "Gold One" missiles in Lebanon on Thursday. Voice of the South radio, mouthpiece of the South Lebanon Army (SLA), said the three missiles hit Jabal Al Rafi hill in Iqim Al Toufah region, a mountainous ridge used by Hizbollah guerrillas to attack Israeli forces occupying a strip in the south. Residents of neighbouring villages said they heard three huge blasts and debris from the explosions reached villages more than two kilometres away from the hill, wounding a woman in the village of Arab Salim and causing panic in the region. Hizbollah did not comment on the attack.

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U.S. says Israel-Syria talks in bargaining phase

Damascus said to have proposed Golan withdrawal compromise

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israel-Syria peace talks have turned the corner into a bargaining phase that could produce concrete results, U.S. officials say after Secretary of State Warren Christopher's latest Middle East tour.

"Neither side is at this point satisfied with what it is hearing from the other on the issues of greatest concern," said a senior State Department official who asked not to be identified.

"Each side is trying to determine whether... what they are going to get from the other makes the price that they are asked to pay worth it."

A senior U.S. official stressed recently that a Syria-Israel peace agreement "would improve the character of the Syrian-American relationship."

Both Israel and the United States feel that Syria has already given evidence of good faith, with Mr. Peres publicly giving Syria credit for restoring calm in Lebanon after the Hizbollah movement staged attacks on northern Israel.

The negotiations are likely to take some time, however, since the two sides are aiming for agreement on a full, detailed peace treaty.

Syria has refused to consider the idea of an initial agreement in principle before more detailed discussions, the practice followed successfully in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian talks.

Under the reported Syrian proposal, Israel would start its withdrawal this year and complete it before the next Israeli general elections planned for June 1996.

Each step would be accompanied by measures to normalise relations between the two countries, ending with an exchange of ambassadors and open borders.

Malaysian group urges ties with Israel

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — The youth wing of Malaysia's governing party Friday proposed opening relations with Israel in a new sign that attitudes towards the Jewish state are thawing in this Muslim nation. Ties with Israel can now be considered after the signing of peace agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Jordan, said Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, the youth wing's leader. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's United Malays National Organisation often speaks through the youth wing on thorny issues to test the public mood. Malaysia, where the official religion is Islam, has banned trade, travel and all other ties with Israel. However, diplomatic relations could only be established after Israel shows sincerity in seeking peace and good ties with the world's Muslim states, Mr. Abdul Rahim was quoted as saying by the national news agency, Bernama. "We only oppose the Zionists but not all Jews are Zionists who are extremists seeking to establish a greater Israel," he said.

Passengers take over runway as protest

ATHENS (R) — Eight passengers, angry over waiting in a hot plane during a take-off delay, took over the runway and blocked air traffic at Athens airport, a Greek civil aviation spokesman said. A group of Olympic Airways passengers, including a Greek rock star and his band, walked out of the plane and took over the take-off strip demanding an immediate departure, he said. "It was crazy. They just took over the runway. Someone might have been hurt," said Thanasis Tripanagiotopoulos, a civil aviation official at the airport. All air traffic was blocked for 10 minutes, until the passengers were persuaded by police to go back to the airplane.

France expels Turkish cleric

SOCHAUX, France (AFP) — France has ordered a Turkish cleric from the eastern town of Sochaux to immediately return to Turkey, officials announced Friday. The order signed by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua came after Abdul Rahman Ciftcioglu, 30, alias Kasim Unal, "proffered public threats," calling for violent action to be taken against Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller. The police department in the eastern Doubs region said the imam of the Sochaux mosque was to be expelled later Friday. The expulsion order comes as headline militants issued threats Friday against French interests unless Paris withdrew all its nationals from Algeria, cut support for the military-backed regime and ended its crackdown on Muslims in France (see page 12).



PRINCE HASSAN IN MA'AN: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan chats with community leaders of Ma'an during a visit he paid to the southern town on Friday (see page 3)

King receives well wishes on eve of anniversary of accession to Throne

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday received congratulatory cables from heads of state, crown princes and prime ministers of Arab and foreign countries congratulating him on the 42nd anniversary of his accession to the Throne.

The cables wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

The cables were sent by King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan II of Morocco, Qatari Leader Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Bahrain Sheikh Isa Ben Salman, Qatari Crown Prince Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani and Prime Minister of Bahrain Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa.

Jordan and Israel resume Dead Sea talks on Monday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and Israeli negotiators resume talks on the key issues of border and water issues on Monday, having worked out the tools for advancing the negotiations.

No precise details were available on the progress reached in the negotiations, held Tuesday and Wednesday at the Moriah Plaza Dead Sea Hotel on the Israeli side at a site that Israel calls Ein Boker. The talks will resume at the same site on Monday.

In simultaneous talks held last week at a tent camp straddling the frontier in the Wadi Araba area, Jordan and Israel made progress on demarcating the tools to demarcate their borders, including maps and other documents that date back to 1928.

The Wadi Araba tent camp was to be dismantled over the weekend and the negotiators would join the broader negotiating process at the Moriah Plaza Hotel on Monday. However, the border demarcation sub-commission would meet separately from other working groups.

Marwan Muasher, spokesman for the Jordanian delegation, said late Wednesday: "We've been engaged in substantial negotiations on sharing water sources, demarcating the border between Jordan and Israel as well as other issues, including opening an air passage between the two countries."

Dr. Muasher refused to be more specific.

Meanwhile, a former Israeli defence minister, Ariel Sharon, conceded that as a general he had ordered his troops to move the Israeli border fence eastwards into Jordan in the 1970s.

Mr. Sharon said on Israeli army radio that when he was head of the southern command he ordered the fence moved for the length of over 100 kilometres in the Wadi Araba area to "prevent infiltrations."

Writing or unwitting, Mr. Sharon's comment consolidated Jordan's case. The Kingdom is demanding the return of more than 380 kilometres of its land now under Israeli occupation and says that the Jewish state encroached upon Jordanian land before and after the 1967 war.

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The King also received congratulatory cables from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

On Thursday, King Hussein received similar cables from Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id of Oman, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Pakistani President Farouq Ahmad Khan, and President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines.

Cables were also sent by UAE Vice-President Sheikh Maktoum Ben Rashed Al Maktoum, Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Ben Issa Al Khalifa, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa Ben Zayed Al Nahayan and UAE Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sultan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan.



Palestinian mothers argue with an Israeli officer asking for the release of their sons who were arrested following protests in the West Bank town of Hebron Friday (AFP photo)

PLO to co-administer crossings in nine days

RAFAH (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said on Friday they would jointly administer international crossings from Gaza and Jericho, now under Palestinian rule, to Egypt and Jordan.

The chief Palestinian negotiator with Israel, Nabil Shaath, and Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal toured the Rafah passenger terminal on the Gaza Strip border with Egypt and announced measures to improve travel across the border.

"I am very happy that all of you are here so you can see the start of the real change in this crossing," said Dr. Shaath, who is also a member of the Palestinian self-rule authority, at a joint news conference with Mr. Shahal.

"On Sunday a week from this Sunday, the Palestinian side will take (charge of) the Palestinian wing of this crossing," he said.

Israeli officials, now administering the border crossing alone, briefed the two officials on the new arrangements, including plans to double the Israeli staff who process passports and inspect baggage.

Mr. Shahal also referred to upcoming changes at the terminal but did not mention details.

France expels Turkish cleric

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Berlusconi seeks to calm Italy

ROME (AFP) — Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, launching his promised message of "optimism" after weeks of scandal and an attack on the lira, called for calm Friday in interviews on national television.

"Be calm — the reality is that it is not raining. Italy has never had it so good," he said on the main news programme of the third public RAI channel.

Some 200,000 new jobs had been created, production was growing and inflation was at an all-time low, he said. "Here is an economy which works, that is the reality," he added.

Mr. Berlusconi had cut short his planned holiday over a national holiday weekend in a bid to stem the crisis hitting his coalition government, beset by internal divisions and a lira which fell to historically low levels by Friday (see page 8).

Speaking on the TG4 channel owned by his Fininvest media empire, Mr. Berlusconi said the lira had been victim to volatile summer speculation.

"In August it is easy to speculate, because there are not many traders around and their movements have a more striking effect," he said in the interview from his villa in Arcore, near the northern city of Milan.

Referring to the internal cabinet divisions between his Forza Italia and the republican Northern League, lead



Silvio Berlusconi by Umberto Bossi. Mr. Berlusconi told TGA that "certain leaders make declarations which are played with by commentators and summer editorialists."

Mr. Bossi has made increasingly sharp attacks on Mr. Berlusconi over the perceived conflict of interest between his job as prime minister and his ownership of the Fininvest media-based empire, which came to a head with the recent arrest of his brother Paolo on bribery charges.

He called on his coalition partners to show "responsibility" and promised to attack the budget deficit in September through "rationalisation" and cuts in the public sector rather than higher taxes.

Parliamentary leaders of the left-wing opposition had asked Mr. Berlusconi Friday to explain himself on Italy's financial crisis, saying solutions had to be found rapidly for two of the basic causes of the lira's collapse.

These were "the inability of the government to adopt serious economic and financial policies" and "the conflict of interests which is increasingly developing into a real moral question," Cesare Salvi and Luigi Berlinguer said in a statement.

Last-minute hitch hits U.S.-N. Korea document

GENEVA (Agencies) — North Korea called in the American delegation for fresh negotiations on their nuclear standoff, in a last-minute hitch to the two sides signing a joint statement, U.S. officials said on Friday evening.

Washington has approved the draft text hammered out by U.S. and North Korean technical experts on Thursday, but Pyongyang had not given the green light, a U.S. official told Reuters as the two delegations began talks in Geneva.

"We had the approval to go ahead. Apparently they did not," a U.S. official told Reuters as the closed-door talks got under way at North Korea's diplomatic mission along Lake Geneva.

"Apparently their capital wants to talk about it more. It was a negotiating tactic," he added. "We hoped there would be a signing ceremony."

Earlier in the day, a North Korean diplomat said the experts had discussed providing Pyongyang with new light-water reactor technology and "normal relations" with Washington in return for freezing its existing nuclear programme.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gallucci headed the small American delegation meeting North Koreans led by Pyongyang's Deputy Foreign Minister Kang Sok-Ju.

Mr. Gallucci said in an interview with CNN that the two countries were looking for an agreement on a joint document covering certain points only.

"We and the North Ko-

reans are working on trying to capture the areas of agreement that we have reached so far in a written statement, and if we can, then we will, and if we cannot, then we will be adjourning this session without it," he said.

The two delegations are to return to their respective capitals Saturday after seven days of talks which have made some progress but still had significant obstacles to overcome, one U.S. official said.

Earlier Friday a North Korean diplomat, Pak Chong Rim, said experts of the two countries had prepared a joint declaration "to be submitted for approval to the two capitals."

"The working group prepared a joint statement on the provision of light water reactors to the DPRK (North Korea), the normalisation between the two countries and other issues in return for the freezing of the nuclear activities of the DPRK," Mr. Pak said.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said negotiators made some progress in resolving their nuclear dispute and would meet again in September.

The talks, which were interrupted after just one day on July 8 by the death of Kim Il Sung, started up again on Aug. 5 here.

Kim Jong Il is unlikely to hold on to power in North Korea for long, a South Korean defence analyst said.

Dr. Taeho Kim said Kim Jong-Il's ability "to strike a modus vivendi with the military will be the most critical variable to his political survival."

Palestinians seek own oil refinery

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of investors is studying the possibility of building a refinery in the occupied territories with capital raised by Palestinians living in the Gulf states, but the idea remains vague and undefined, officials and businessmen said Friday.

They said no feasibility studies or even preliminary studies were conducted on the idea and the group had not formally approached the Jordanian government or the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC).

Said Al Tal, director-general of the JPRC, said the group got in touch with the firm in an informal manner. "Obviously, being a refinery, we know something about refining and they wanted to discuss it with us," Mr. Tal told the Jordan Times.

Reports said that the idea of setting up a refinery in the occupied territories came up after it was found that the JPRC could not accommodate the processing requirements of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho.

According to a local report, "the PNA is unable to supply the JPRC with a sufficient amount of crude oil," hence the self-rule authority now wants "to build a refinery in the West Bank."

But Mr. Tal dismissed the report as groundless. "There was never any discussion involving the JPRC," he said.

Asked whether the company was in a position to meet the needs of the Palestinians, Mr. Tal said: "If there is a proposal from our government to us to study the possibility, we could study it."

On the setting up of a refinery in the occupied territories, Mr. Tal said it was a subject which needs extensive studies and preparations. "There has to be an ideal site, there has to be a regular source of crude, there has to be water and a lot of other things," he told the Jordan Times.

According to Palestinian businessmen here, the focus of the group of investors, who were not identified, is Palestinians in the Gulf states for capital. The group also raised the issue with oil companies in the Gulf, apparently with a view to drawing from their expertise in setting up a refinery, they said.

"Beyond that, there is no indication yet that Palestinians in the Gulf states are enthusiastic about the idea," said a businessman. No details were available on the estimated cost of the project.

Others said the idea of a refinery had to be seen in the context of a broader approach to setting up basic industries in the Palestinian territories such as a cement company and iron and steel plants. But in the absence of a final agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on economic cooperation, the host of ideas is mostly left to the private sector; there are no clear ideas on how the PLO leadership viewed cooperation with Jordan in such strategic industries.

"There are lots of ideas being discussed and various options being considered," said a businessman. "But in the absence of clear positions on the PLO's part, everything is hanging in the air."

In the context of the reported quest for a refinery, the businessman said, "for the next few years, the Palestinians will have to depend on imported fuel and they have to make up

their mind from where to get it."

"It could come from Israel or Jordan or any other source. But given the situation today, fuel from Jordan is cheaper than that from Israel," added the businessman.

However, under the present conditions, Jordan cannot export crude oil or fuel oil, whether gasoline or diesel, simply because the Kingdom itself is getting its supplies to meet its own local demand from Iraq under a tacit approval from the U.N. Sanctions Committee.

According to reports, the refinery being discussed by the group of investors will have a processing capacity of 15,000 barrels of crude oil per day supplied by "Arab and Islamic countries."

Mr. Tal described the quantity as far below the actual needs of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel, mindful that the Palestinians might get concessionary prices for their crude oil needs from the oil-producing Gulf states and that have prices lower than those in the Jewish state, insisted on including a clause related to oil in an economic agreement it signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in April.

The clause states that any difference in prices of gasoline in the autonomous territories will not fall short by more than 15 per cent of the maximum gasoline price in Israel.

The idea behind the clause is clear: Israel does not want its own oil refining industry to suffer as a result of Israelis driving into the Palestinian territories for their needs of gasoline at cheaper prices.

"That is," explained an economist, "if, and when the Palestinians produce their own gasoline at cheaper prices."

There are 12 northern and six southern provinces.

Tensions over administrative reform and decentralisation were among the causes of friction between Mr. Saleh and former Vice-President and YSP leader Ali Saleh Al Beidh which led to the two-month civil war, the sources said.

A committee was set up to revise provincial boundaries after the 1990 merger but failed to accomplish its task.

"The old committee was unable to introduce reforms because of political differences between Saleh and Beidh. This is no longer the case now," one source said.

Mr. Beidh declared a breakaway state in the south shortly after he started on May 4, but it collapsed when forces loyal to Mr. Saleh captured its capital, Aden on July 7. Mr. Beidh fled to Oman.

Before the war, each of the two former parts of united Yemen was virtually under the control of its pre-merger ruler.

Mr. Saleh was now implementing parts of an abortive national reconciliation accord he signed with Mr. Beidh three months before the war, but without referring to it, one source said.

The accord, signed in Jordan, provided for the redrawing of united Yemen into no more than seven provinces and the introduction of local governments.

The source said that among the president's priorities was making all local officials electable from the governor down.

Yemen likely to redraw provincial boundaries

SANAA (R) — Yemen's provincial boundaries are likely to change under reforms aimed at integrating north and south which should strengthen the grip of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, political and official sources say.

Mr. Saleh, whose troops won a two-month civil war against southern Yemeni forces on July 7, appointed Abdul Karim Al Arshi to head a committee to revise administrative division in a decree published by official newspaper Al Thawra on Wednesday.

Mr. Arshi is a former member of the presidential council and a former minister of local administration.

An official source said the decree "marks the real state towards a truly united country and the first step towards local governments elected at all levels."

But one political source said: "The redrawing, involving a change of administrative boundaries, is likely to strengthen Saleh's grip over the country."

In Yemen's tribal north, redrawing could be used to weaken certain tribes whose loyalties were in doubt, and in the south it could be used to weaken the traditional power bases of the former ruling group, the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), he added.

The two parts of Yemen merged in 1990, but provincial boundaries have remained unchanged since before the 1960s, when the south was ruled by the Shite Muslim leaders and the north occupied by the British.

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UNREST IN HEBRON: Israeli soldiers guard a handcuffed Palestinian youth arrested following protests in Hebron on Friday. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on

Friday asked the Security Council to reauthorise a U.N. observer mission for Hebron, saying its mission had not been completed (AFP photo)

Turkmen leader to visit Iran

TASHKENT (R) — The leader of the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, will visit neighbouring Iran next week to sign several cooperation agreements, an official Turkmen newspaper said on Friday.

Turkmenbashi Iskra said new accords would be signed in Tehran but it did not specify if these would include a long-awaited deal to build a gas pipeline through Iran.

The paper also reported praise spoken on Thursday by visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati for Mr. Niyazov — the latest sign of an increasingly close relationship.

"We highly appreciate the wisdom and politics which Saparmurat Turkmenbashi has towards his southern neighbour and we believe that our ties will be strengthened and developed," the newspaper quoted Mr. Velayati as saying.

"Turkmenbashi," which means chief of the Turkmen, is the name Mr. Niyazov prefers to his real surname. He is due to visit Tehran next Tuesday.

"In Tehran, they (Niyazov and Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani) are planning to sign some agreements," said the newspaper, seen in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent.

"They (Niyazov and Velayati) created a working group to prepare the documents to be signed."

A senior Turkmen official contacted by telephone from Tashkent said it was probable that a final agreement on building a gas pipeline through Iran would be signed.

The pipeline, estimated to cost in excess of \$2 billion and have an annual capacity of 15 billion cubic metres of gas, would be the first from the Commonwealth of Independent States to cross Iran.

Iranian Oil Minister Housheini Azadeh said in Tehran on July 9 he expected final agreement on the project within a month.

If the pipeline is agreed and built, it would profoundly change Turkmenistan's geopolitical position.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PLO asks for extension of Hebron mission

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) asked the Security Council to reauthorise a U.N. observer mission for the West Bank town of Hebron, saying its mission had not been completed. Earlier this week, the 116 observers left Hebron, site of the massacre of more than 30 worshippers at the Ibrahim Mosque, after Israel refused to allow an extension of the mission, according to a PLO letter obtained Thursday. The mission of Danish, Norwegian and Italian peacekeepers was sent under an agreement between Israel and the PLO March 31 amid growing international pressure on the Israeli government. The letter said the situation of Hebron remains tense and that the mosque remains closed, saying that Israel violated the spirit of the March 31 agreement and a U.N. resolution on the matter passed March 18.

7 soldiers killed in clash with Kurds

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish army launched a manhunt early Friday in eastern Turkey after suspected Kurdish rebels killed seven soldiers and wounded an eighth, the semi-official Anatolia news agency said. Troops were combing the border region near Armenia and Iran after "separatist terrorists" the term used by Ankara to designate guerrillas of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), after Thursday's attack. The guerrillas ambushed the troops with machine-guns in the Aralik region of Iğdır province shortly before midnight Thursday. Anatolia quoted the army as saying.

Chief rabbi of Morocco dies at 88

RABAT (AP) — Yedidia Monsenego, the chief rabbi of Morocco, has died, the official Maghreb Arab Presse (MAP) news agency reported Friday. He was 88. Monsenego, who died Thursday at home in the Jewish cemetery, was to be buried Friday in the Jewish cemetery in Rabat, the agency reported. He came from a long line of rabbis who settled in Morocco after Spain expelled its Jews in 1492.

Eritrea, Sudan discuss bilateral ties

NAIROBI (AFP) — Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has held talks with Sudanese Foreign Minister Hussein Abu Saleh on relations between the two countries, Eritrean radio reported. Mr. Afewerki and Mr. Saleh met in the Eritrean town of Asmara on Thursday to discuss ongoing efforts to patch up relations between the two countries, said the broadcast. Mr. Saleh delivered a message from Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir. Eritrea has complained that guerrillas are infiltrating its southern borders from neighbouring Sudan, following incursions earlier this year.

Former British minister to meet Qadhafi

EDINBURGH (R) — A former British law minister said on Friday he had accepted an invitation from Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi to visit Tripoli and presumed they would talk about the Lockerbie bombing. Britain and the United States hold Libya responsible for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie in December 1988. They issued arrest warrants in November 1991 for two Libyans, Abdul Baset Ali Mohammad Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, on charges of having planted the radio cassette bomb. Nicholas Fairbairn, a former solicitor-general for Scotland, said no agenda had been suggested for his talks with the Libyan leader but he presumed the meeting was in connection with Lockerbie. "A message came to my office saying he would like me to go there to see him," he said. "I'm quite happy to do that."

Thai police change tack in Saudi case

BANGKOK (R) — Thai investigators believe the wife and son of a key witness in a case involving stolen Saudi gems, case may have been killed in an accident after all and not murdered as first thought, local media reported on Friday.

The Nation newspaper quoted investigators as saying a thorough investigation of the car in which Darawadi, 35, and Seri, 14, were found dead on Aug. 1 showed they could have been killed by the impact after swerving off the road.

"I believe it was an accident," commander of the scientific crime detection division Saklert Kannasut was quoted as saying.

Police were not available for comment on the report.

Police originally said the two: the wife and son of gem trader Santi Srithanachan, were murdered and the car was crashed to make it look like an accident.

Mr. Santi was arrested on charges of having bought some of the \$20 million worth of jewellery stolen by a Thai worker from a palace in Riyadh in 1990.

Thai police caught the thief, returned the gems and closed the case. But Riyadh demanded it be reopened after discovering 75 per cent of the returned jewellery was fake.

Mr. Santi turned state witness, leading to the arrest of at least seven people including three policemen on charges of embezzling. Dozens of senior police officials, now face further charges.

The local media has reported that police sources suspect the senior officials could have been involved in the mysterious deaths.

Interior Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said it was impossible the two were killed in an accident.

Meanwhile, Thai police have told the Interior Ministry they think two Saudi officials sent to Thailand to retrieve the jewellery may also have been involved in the scam, according to ministry officials.

The ministry is reviewing a police request for their extradition.

U.S. says ex-king among Afghan options

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton's administration said Thursday that ending bloodshed and "ongoing anarchy" in Afghanistan depends on finding a government acceptable to all Afghans, and it could include the long-exiled king.

Robin Raphael, assistant secretary of state for South Asia, made the statements to members of Congress, some have been concerned by warlordism, killing and narcotics trafficking in the South Asian country since the fall of the last Soviet-installed government in 1992.

Problems have worsened with intensified factional warfare since January, she said, when "things began to fall apart" around Kabul, the capital. This year has added new waves of refugees and 23,000 dead or wounded. Ms. Raphael told the sub-committee on Asia of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives.

"Unable to affect events directly, we support coordinated efforts by the U.N. and other international organisations, to find

a government "acceptable to all Afghans," she said.

"This political process could include the former king, Zahir Shah, should he so desire," said Ms. Raphael. He occasionally meets with U.S. officials at his exile retreat near Rome.

"It would appear entirely appropriate to ask whether the United States, given its heavy involvement in Afghanistan during the 1980s, doesn't bear a special moral responsibility," said the sub-committee chairman, Gary Ackerman.

The United States and world community ultimately will have to pay a high price for inattention to Afghanistan, Representative Dana Rohrabacher warned.

But "we can't plant a government in Afghanistan," said Ms. Raphael.

"Not unless we use the power we have," Mr. Rohrabacher retorted.

Mr. Rohrabacher, a Republican conservative, said he heard that those who bombed the New York World Trade Centre in 1992 may have links with



Ex-king Zahir Shah

drug traffickers believed moving among Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ms. Raphael said she could not discuss such matters at a public session.

Mr. Rohrabacher said King Zahir, whom he has met, could be "a vehicle for decent (Afghan) people who want to throw out the drug lords and terrorists to rally around. What other alternative is there?"

Rival guerrilla factions destroying Kabul, led by Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and President Burhanuddin Rabbani, are intransigent, Ms. Raphael said. It is not really a government, she went on, because there is no control and cabinet ministers do not meet.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Coup De Bleu Dans L'Etoile
17:11 Fantomette
17:30 Le Monde Sous Marin
18:30 News in French
18:45 Jihana
19:00 News in Hebrew
19:30 Dimension
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Movies, Games, and Videos
21:00 One to One
21:30 The Campbell
22:00 News in English

PRAYER TIMES

04:27 Fajr
05:33 Sunrise
12:41 Dhuhr
16:25 Asr
19:20 Maghreb
21:00 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweilich, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623941

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be hot with winds north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 21 / 35
Aqaba 27 / 41
Dacra 19 / 38
Jordan Valley 25 / 40
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 34, Aqaba 40 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 21 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
Dr. Walid Al-Mari 675485
Dr. Rami Magwi 794785
Dr. Khalil Jhali 740740
First pharmacy 661912
Pardova pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 671055
Nairoda pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qam
Alqada pharmacy
ZARQA:
Dr. Fawaz Hamdallah 903642
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Road Bank 773121
Highway Police 634022
Traffic Police 696390
Public Security Department 630321
Police Complaints 603800
Water and Sewerage 661176
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 783121
Complaints 783111
Telephone Information 121
(directory assistance)
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Rapid Telephone Repairs 661101
Road Telephone 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 626381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642442
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malina, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 664174
Shamsani Hospital 691131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musabir Hospital 667227
Al-Ahli, Adabi 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Al-Musabir 777012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marfa 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
The Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Filim Modern Hospital (09)999990
IRBID:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)225555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)222222
The Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (09)341111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200. 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
08:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:15 Agaba (RJ)
10:15 Dhahran (RJ)
10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
11:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:35 London (RJ)
17:35 Cairo (RJ)
18:25 Istanbul (RJ)
19:25 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
19:45 Madrid (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:30 Vienna (OA)
15:30 Muscat, Doha (GF)
15:45 Rome, Larnaca (AZ)
20:30 Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:15 Beirut (ME)
22:25 Amsterdam (KL)
01:30 Sanaa (TV)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
08:30 Agaba (RJ)
08:30 Madrid (add) (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30 Geneva, Istanbul (RJ)
12:35 Athens, Brussels (RJ)
13:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:45 London (RJ)
14:30 Madrid (RJ)
20:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Beirut (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Beirut (ME)
13:50 Vienna (OA)
14:30 Abu Dhabi (GF)
21:15 Cairo (MS)
22:25 Damascus, Paris (AF)
01:30 Amsterdam (KL)
02:30 Sanaa (TV)

HILAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apple 650 / 430
Banana (Mekassar) 680
Cabbage 120 / 70
Carrot 270 / 200
Cauliflower 200 / 120
Cucumber (large) 180 / 100
Cucumber (small) 370 / 270
Eggplant 180 / 100
Fig 450 / 350
Garlic 300 / 200
Grapes 280 / 200
Lemon 480 / 380
Marrow (large) 280 / 100
Marrow (small) 420 / 300
Mushroom 140 / 70
Okra 1100 / 800
Orange 500 / 300
Onion (dry) 70 / 200
Pepper 700 / 500
Sweet Melon 180 / 100
Pepper (hot) 250 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 280 / 180
Potato 420 / 280
Peaches 900 / 600
Tomato 120 / 70
String beans 700 / 500
Watermelon 70 / 50

The Hashemite Book chronicles development of Armed Forces

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Thursday presented His Majesty King Hussein with a copy of The Hashemite Book, which documents the achievements of the Hashemite family over the past decades.

Presented to the King on the 42nd anniversary of his accession to the throne, the book contains chapters dedicated to the development of the Armed Forces.

King Hussein, in a message to the Crown Prince, paid tribute to his efforts and cultural and political activities.

"I take deep pride in all the activities you undertake on behalf of the Hashemite family, all the fruitful projects and meetings held with our dear Jordanian community, the historic responsibility you shoulder towards the fulfilment of national achievements and your defence of rights, freedom and peace through your lectures, research and writings," said the King.

The Hashemite Book contains ideas, concepts and facts worthy of reaching all citizens in the Kingdom as they provide a rich substance

for researchers and scholars who can build on them, added King Hussein.

Concepts contained in The Hashemite Book should be implanted in the minds and hearts of the coming generations as they provide the pure facts about the country and its leadership over the years, said the King.

Entrusting the Crown Prince with the task of supervising the implementation of ideas contained in The Hashemite Book, King Hussein said that these chapters should be translated into practice with the help of experts, scholars, committees and institutions, paying particular attention to reorganising the domestic front so that the country's young can follow in the footsteps of their ancestors.

The King said he fully supported the work of the Crown Prince in further upholding rights and justice and in serving the higher national interests.

Palace denies Prince visited Israel

AMMAN (AP) — The Royal Palace on Friday denied that King Hussein's nephew visited Israel to discuss using the Jewish state's Mediterranean ports for Jordanian imports and exports.

A palace spokesperson, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the report published in Israel Thursday was "baseless and fabricated."

"Neither Prince Talal nor any other member of the royal family visited Israel," the spokesperson told the

Associated Press.

Israel Radio reported Thursday that Prince Talal, King Hussein's military secretary, met with Zvi Zilker, mayor of the port of Ashdod, and other Israeli officials.

Some Israeli newspapers published photos of what they said was Prince Talal, who reportedly told the mayor that Jordan was keen on securing a separate 100-acre section of the Israeli port for Jordanian trade.

But officials close to palace said the photos showed Talal

Halawani, a Jordanian trader who was on a business trip to Israel.

One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Halawani "was tricked into meeting with the Israeli mayor, who thought that the man was Prince Talal."

"An Israeli company had a dispute with the mayor and it apparently wanted to embarrass him," the official said without elaboration.

Mr. Halawani was not immediately available for comment.

Ma'an citizens greet Crown Prince with tumultuous welcome, celebrations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Friday was given a tumultuous welcome by citizens of Ma'an where he performed Friday prayers and attended a celebration of the 42nd anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the throne.

Prince Hassan joined hundreds of worshippers at Ma'an Grand Mosque for prayers and listened to the Friday sermon in which the preacher underscored the importance of safeguarding national unity and warned those attempting to tamper with it.

The preacher talked about the relationship tying the Hashemite family to the holy city of Jerusalem and the sacrifices they offered in protecting it.

After prayers, Ma'an citizens gathered around Prince Hassan chanting slogans welcoming him.

They also pledged to stand united behind the King's leadership.

The Crown Prince then moved through the crowds to the site of the celebration.

Several speeches were delivered voicing pride in King Hussein's leadership and expressing support for his historic role in the Middle East.

Prince Hassan delivered an address in which he reminded the audience of the important status of Ma'an as the first capital of King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein.

The Crown Prince also commended Ma'an city, describing it as a place of genius, neighbouring the

place where the Abbasid revolution set out from Humeima, where the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein settled, and where all the free Arabs of Bilad Al Sham (Greater Syria) had flocked to express support for him.

"We, on this holy land, are honoured to shoulder the responsibility although this responsibility and trust is great," said the Crown Prince.

He said King Hussein's key role in unifying ranks in Jordan gives him the impetus to persevere in these difficult times "which are full of challenges."

He said the current stage was not a move from war to peace inasmuch as it is a transition from the no-war, no-peace situation towards "war against everything that is abnormal in our lives," as His Majesty has said.

The Crown Prince said the decade between 1995 and 2005 for Jordan is a decade of work and construction. Thus, added Prince Hassan, Jordan has a grave responsibility in planning the future of this region and this "dear part of the great Jordanian homeland."

The Crown Prince said "thinking requires a tax..." and as His Majesty has said, those shouldering responsibilities have to pay a tax every time the sun rises. The tax of faith and belonging to this dear homeland is an honour for all of us, and with this tax we are destined to work, work and work towards a better future."

Clear strategy for regional interaction is necessary, says Crown Prince

AMMAN (Petra) — It is necessary to ensure the interaction of the southern region with the other regions of the Kingdom within a clear strategy, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said.

Addressing a ceremony Thursday at the headquarters of the Southern Military Command Headquarters to honour personnel and organisations that contributed to the opening of the border crossing between Jordan and Israel in the south last Monday, the Prince added that more action rather than words and speeches were needed to deepen the concept of "field work."

The political will exists to introduce changes for the better, and in the south, work should begin by activating the Aqaba harbour, improving the environment and protecting the sea and beaches from pollution, said Prince Hassan.

Referring to plans to establish a free zone in Aqaba and industrial zones near the harbour and the airport, the Crown Prince said such plans should be conducted in stages, with careful consideration to civil works and infrastructure including water and electricity.

He said that only when well-prepared plans are finalised can Jordan request additional assistance and loans



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Thursday addressing a ceremony to honour those who participated in technical preparations to open the Jordan-Israel border between Aqaba and Eilat.

from international sources, to finance these schemes.

Referring to the peace process, the Crown Prince said that there can be no peace in the absence of balanced and integrated opportunities for the local population and social justice. This balance, he said, will be achieved through the country's intrinsic capabilities.

Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzak Ensour also addressed the ceremony and paid tribute to the engineers and workers who have carried out the Aqaba-Eilat border crossing project.

Prince Hassan later distributed mementoes to personnel and institutions which took part in the border opening.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Premier opens Rawdah tunnel

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali opened Al Rawdah Traffic Tunnel on the University of Jordan Road, as part of Jordan's celebrations of the 42nd anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the throne. Dr. Majali lauded the efforts of the Greater Amman Municipality to implement this project in record time. It took the municipality two months to complete the construction of the 400-metre-long tunnel, which cost JD 600,000. Attending the tunnel opening ceremony Thursday were senior government officials. Also marking the national celebrations, Minister of Post and Communication Hashem Dabbas laid the foundation stone of the 4th earth satellite station in Bagha and the telecommunication compound building in Tla' Al Ali in the western outskirts of Amman. The 4th satellite station will replace the one linked with the satellites over the Indian Ocean. The new station will use advanced digital technology, thus reducing the amounts of money paid in the form of annual subscriptions for using advanced digital systems.

Ministry denies cutting subsidies

AMMAN (Petra) — The Supply Ministry Friday dismissed as baseless the news carried by some local newspapers that the ministry plans to eliminate the food subsidies on basic food items by the end of August. The ministry subsidises such items as bread, rice, sugar and powder milk. A ministry spokesperson said that while ministry respects the circulation of such groundless news, it would like to reiterate that the ministry's budget for the current year included certain allocations for food subsidies. The sources added that rumours about reducing the number of beneficiaries to a minimum are untrue, adding that the ministry seeks to channel support to the eligible beneficiaries. He said the ministry will distribute food coupons for 1995 in October. The source explained the procedure followed in purchasing basic food items, saying that such items are bought in accordance with specifications stated in the tender invitations. When referring tenders to lowest bidders, the ministry takes into consideration quality and price, the source said.

Phone lines clog to occupied territories

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Phone lines between Jordan and the occupied territories — through an Israeli switchboard — remained clogged with thousands of calls on Friday, four days after the Kingdom and Israel opened direct phone lines between them.

Callers trying to reach relatives in the West Bank and Israel itself reported several hours persistent trying before getting through.

"It took me more than 48 hours before I could reach my cousin in Tel Aviv," said a European diplomat.

"Obviously, it has been like

the opening of floodgates; it will take some time before the traffic slows down."

Telecommunication Corporation (TCC) officials would only say that the number of lines available between Jordan and Israel were limited.

No statistics were available on the number of calls made from Jordan to the occupied territories or Israel since the lines went operational on Aug. 7 as part of confidence-building measures stipulated in the Washington Declaration signed by His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on July 25.

Israel's Berek telecommunication company reported that 25,000 calls were made to Jordan from Israel between Sunday and Wednesday.

Prior to the opening of the

lines, calls between Jordan and the occupied territories were made through costly third party connections in Cyprus, Europe and the United States.

The Jerusalem Post reported on Thursday that Berek Director General Yitzhak Kaul had sent a fax message to TCC Director General Ahmad Nawawi proposing a meeting in Jordan or Israel to discuss communications links and additional services. No comment was available in Amman on how Mr. Nawawi responded to the suggestion.

The TCC has set a call rate of JD 1.2 per minute to Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The lower rate available to all other destinations between 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. is not applicable to calls made to Israel.

Israeli Finance Minister

Avraham Shohat and Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni on Wednesday signed regulations setting rates for direct and operator-assisted calls to Jordan from Israel. A peak-hour (8 a.m. to 10 p.m.) calls will cost three shekels (around 850 fils) per minute and 2.4 shekels (680 fils) at other times. The rates have to be approved by the Israeli Knesset.

The rates could be reduced as and when Jordanian and Israeli telecommunication networks are linked as part of a regional fibre-optic cable network that would include Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. The European Union is partly financing the project, which would take several years to be completed. The Jerusalem Post also reported Thursday that it had

called Jordan Television (JTV) with a request for a schedule of the programmes of the English Channel on a regular basis so that it could carry them. At present the Jerusalem Post carried JTV English programme schedules but with a notation — "unofficial."

"The new spirit of cooperation between Jordan and Israel has not passed by the Jerusalem Post," said the right-wing newspaper.

Abbas Ar'at, head of JTV's scheduling department, confirmed that he had received the call and that he was studying "what I can do" to meet the Post request.

He said he had asked the Post to call again on Sunday to make arrangements for the regular mailing or faxing of JTV programmes to the newspaper.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FUHEIS FIFTH FESTIVAL

- * Concert by vocalists Ra'ed Rahadi, and Omar Abdulat at the main theatre at 21:00.
- * Seminar entitled "The Abounding Natural Resources in Jordan" with the participation of Mr. Kamal Jreissat and Dr. Zaidam Al Muhaisen at the festival site at 18:30.
- * Poetry recital by Jordanian poet Saleem Al-Wake and Lebanese poet Issam Abdulh of Lebanon at the festival site at 19:30.
- * Exhibition of Jordanian scripts, documents, and books.
- * Abstract art paintings exhibition by Salwa Amman, Darya Zetfah, Norma Hattar, and Elias Tu'meh.

- * Exhibition on the city of Salt.
- * Caricature drawings exhibition by Imad Haljal, Kifah Mahmood, and Khaldoun Gharaibeh.
- * Exhibition of handicrafts.
- * Comprehensive agricultural exhibition (held for the first time with the participation of the private and public sectors).

EXHIBITIONS

- * Exhibition of oil paintings by Princess Wijdan Ali at the Balqa' Art Gallery in Fuheis (10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720677).

U.S.: Israel-Syria talks in bargaining phase

(Continued from page 1)

Israel. Damascus would also agree to the presence of a U.S. peacekeeping force or international observers.

According to the Israeli media, Syria has also demanded a total Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon insisting on U.S. and Israeli recognition of the role Syria plays in the country.

Syria is the main foreign power broker in Lebanon, where it maintains 30,000 troops.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa has described the latest talks with Mr. Christopher as "serious and constructive" but said there had been "no real progress."

U.S. officials in Washington believe the regular peace shuttle is reaping dividends and although neither Israel or Syria is happy with the proposals put forward by the other, they have entered a period of bargaining.

For Washington the progress achieved so far would

justify a monthly visit by Mr. Christopher to the region.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said on Friday he respected the American position in peace moves with Syria that it was not Washington's role to put forward compromise proposals.

Mr. Rabin, facing attacks from the right-wing opposition over Israel's stand on the Golan Heights, said in remarks broadcast on Israel's army radio:

"I very much respect the American position that understands that their role is not to bring bridging or compromise proposals."

He added: "I see no reason for America to change the manner of handling (the situation). It has worked well until today ... and it has to continue that way in the future."

Reports that Mr. Christopher had taken a compromise proposal to Damascus to move the Israel-Syria talks have created a furor in the Jewish state.

One no-show, one flawless show

By Angham Tamimi

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Wednesday night's Fuheis audience was upset and furious when Iraqi singer Haitham Youssef failed to appear as billed on the programme. Most of them bought tickets just to see him.

Instead Sina', another contemporary Iraqi singer, whose name was not posted by the Fuheis administrative body although she was invited to sing, was there alongside with Syrian singer Jihad Al Ameer, whose name did appear on the billing.

A member of the Fuheis Festival administration said that Haitham Youssef phoned from Iraq a few hours before the show saying that the Baghdad government prevented him from leaving the country. Other administrators said that he had another programme in the U.S. at the same time.

Regardless of the explanations some of the audience asked for refunds.

Sina' is no less a singer, and maybe even better than Haitham Youssef regarding voice purity and quality. She was once described as "the future Um Kulthoum of Iraq." But, she is a very shy young woman.

Wednesday night, Sina' was criticised for the way she stood on stage. She kept rocking from side to side as if she had stage fright.

But in fact, she was as confident as any other professional artist; the problem is actually much more serious.

Although only 21-years-old, Sina' suffers from heart disease. Doctors have forbidden her to stand for more than an hour, practice any athletics, and wear high-heeled shoes.

So, on Wednesday she was barely standing, she said. She was actually suffering to entertain her audience.

At 12, she won first place in a singing competition

held on Iraq T.V., but because of her condition, she was forced to quit singing. She later appeared in 1990, when she once again won the first place in another competition.

Hearing Sina's voice, the renowned Iraqi composer Taleb Qaraghulhi was astonished. "He wrote some notes for me to sing, and I did," Sina' told the Jordan Times.

Kadhim Al Saher, a famous Iraqi singer and composer in the Arab World, liked her type of voice and invited her to sing some of his compositions. "It was a quite successful cooperation for me," said Sina'.

Her style was welcomed in her country. She sang folkloric pieces accompanied by modern instruments and a quick rhythm. Her music and her performance had a new and different taste.

Adel Hashimi, an Iraqi music critic known to dissect and thoroughly critique a

performance, wrote of Sina', "she sings with all her senses, as if living the song's story at the time of performing."

"She has the highest range of Iraqi women vocalists. She does not need to rehearse, because her voice is created practiced. In fact, it is flawless," said Mr. Hashimi.

"I have been offered several compositions by Yemeni, Syrian and other Arab composers recently. I am working hard to drive my name to the front pages," said Sina'.

In 1994, she won 10th place in a Monte Carlo competition, then first place again in another competition in which many renowned Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian and Iraqi vocalists participated.

For the time being, she said, "I am planning to join the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad for the next semester to study piano and oud."



U.N. force: Lifting Bosnian arms embargo spells disaster

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations in Sarajevo said Friday it would be difficult for U.N. peacekeepers to remain in Bosnia if the arms embargo on the Muslim-led government were lifted.

The U.N. was reacting to news from Washington that the embargo might be scrapped if Bosnian Serbs failed to accept a major powers' peace plan.

"If the U.S. goes ahead, it is difficult to see circumstances in which the U.N. peacekeepers could remain in Bosnia," spokesman Michael Williams told Reuters in Zagreb.

U.S. President Bill Clinton promised to ask the United Nations to lift the Bosnian

arms embargo by the end of October unless the Serbs accept the peace plan they rejected last week.

The Senate took a hot-and-cold position by approving two bills: One urging Mr. Clinton to ask the United Nations to lift the embargo and the other to simply order the president to unilaterally lift it by Nov. 15 to arm the Muslims.

The embargo hinders the lightly armed but numerous Bosnian army forces more than the well-armed Serbs and its removal has long been supported by many U.S. politicians.

The Bosnian Serbs have repeatedly rejected international and Serbian govern-

ment pressure to accept a last-ditch peace plan drawn up by the United States, European Union and Russia to divide Bosnia into two almost equal parts.

The U.N. peacekeepers in Sarajevo said lifting the arms embargo spelled disaster for Muslims ringed by rebel Serbs unless the world reverses its refusal to intervene militarily on the ground.

They warn that U.N. aid deliveries to two million people would cease, peacekeeping troops would leave and Serbs could overrun U.N.-mandated Muslim "safe havens" before Bosnia's government army could obtain weapons needed to defend them.

Extracting 18,000 U.N. Protection Force soldiers from exposed enclaves could be messy as Serbs might try to seize some as human shields to deter NATO action and terrified Muslim inhabitants could block the evacuation of others.

In one more bid to persuade the recalcitrant Serbs to opt for peace, U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg will visit Belgrade, which has backed the major powers' peace deal, and Bosnian Serb stronghold of Pale this weekend, the U.N. said.

U.N. efforts to feed the city suffered another blow when gunfire hit cargo aircraft, forcing the suspension of the relief airlift that had restarted only two days previously.

Residents scattered as Bosnian Serb snipers targeted the city centre and a hospital said an 11-year-old girl was apparently killed by a 12.7 mm machinegun round which ricocheted off a building.

"This is a large calibre weapon in violation of the NATO ultimatum. We think the shot came from the Bosnian Serb side," UNPROFOR spokesman in Sarajevo Major Rob Annink told Reuters.

In another serious breach of the weapons exclusion zone, a mortar round was reported to have struck near the hospital but caused no casualties.

The worsening military situation came as the Bosnian



French UNPROFOR marksmen search for after an 11-year-old girl was slain by a sniper Serb positions on a hill overlooking Sarajevo using an anti-aircraft cannon. (AFP photo)

government agreed to a U.N. proposal to demilitarise a 20 kilometre zone in and around Sarajevo, replacing soldiers with policemen armed only with pistols.

The measure, which military analysts doubt will succeed, has not yet been agreed by the Bosnian Serbs, who still lay siege to the capital.

U.N. Commander Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose and UNPROFOR chief of civil affairs Victor Andrejev are due to meet Serb leaders Friday.

"It's a high-level meeting in Pale on a number of issues — reopening Sarajevo's access routes, releasing detainees and a possible demilitarisation of Sarajevo," UNPROFOR spokeswoman Claire Grimes told Reuters.

Bosnian Serb forces reacted to Western pressure to agree to peace by shutting

land supply routes to Sarajevo two weeks ago.

Outside the city, the Bosnian Serb and Muslim-led Bosnian armies were reported pouring troops into a battle zone where the U.N. has threatened air strikes to end the fighting.

A U.N. spokesman said about 2,000 to 3,000 Bosnian government soldiers had been seen bound for the confrontation area to the west of Sarajevo.

"We also see the BSA (Bosnian Serb Army) increasing their troop numbers in the area, between Sarajevo and Visoko, whether it's for an attack or defence it's impossible to answer."

Bosnian Serb forces have again stolen heavy weapons from a U.N. collection point, U.N. officials said Friday. U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman

Major Dacre Holloway said the Serbs took a 105 mm gun and ammunition from a collection point at Krivovljani, northwest of Sarajevo, and switched it with a 76mm gun.

Troops from UNPROFOR's Ukrainian contingent discovered the trick and recovered the larger gun after several hours of negotiations, he said.

But the Serbs then took back the 76mm weapon and refused to give it up, even though it contravened the U.N.-declared 20-kilometre (12-mile) heavy weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo.

Last Friday NATO jets destroyed a Serb anti-tank gun after the Serbs stole five heavy weapons from another U.N. collection point. They subsequently returned the arms.



An 11-year-old Bosnian girl lies dead on a stretcher in the morgue at Sarajevo's Kosevo hospital after she was slain by a sniper using an anti-aircraft cannon. (AFP photo)

Bangladeshi Islamic groups want Nasrin home for trial

DHAKA (R) — Radical Muslim groups demanded Friday that the Bangladesh government bring feminist writer Taslima Nasrin back from her Swedish sanctuary and vowed to continue their street protests calling for her death.

"I ask the government to immediately bring her home and punish her for committing an unforgivable crime against Islam and its followers," said Maulana Matur Rahman, deputy chief of the Jamaat-e-Islami Party.

Ms. Nasrin, 32, arrived secretly in Stockholm Tuesday from Bangladesh, escaping death threats which had forced the physician-turned-author into hiding for two months.

She briefly emerged from hiding last week to be present in a Dhaka court when granted bail on charges of hurting Muslim religious feelings.

"The government had conspired to let her go, and it's the responsibility of the government to ensure her return to face the charges against her," Nazami said in a statement.

"If anyone had thought that we shall go off the streets and rest after the murder

(murder) Nasrin fled away, it is living in a fool's paradise," said one leader of the Islamic United Action Committee.

"There can be no let-up in the campaign until and unless the agent of Satan is appropriately punished," the Islamic United Action Committee leader told Reuters.

"If she continues to use her vulgar tongue and pen against Islam while in freedom, the government of Bangladesh will have to bear the responsibility for it," he said.

Nearly 500 Muslims from two small militant organisations demonstrated following noon prayers in Dhaka Friday, calling for Ms. Nasrin to be hanged.

Witnesses said the protesters paraded through the streets near Dhaka's Baitul Mokarram Mosque and dispersed peacefully shortly afterwards.

Police continued Friday a tight watch on the Swedish embassy and diplomatic missions of other countries that supported Ms. Nasrin, who went into hiding in Sweden immediately after arrival, saying she wanted to rest and work.

The Bangladesh government has said there was no

legal restriction on her leaving the country under her bail conditions.

Ms. Nasrin had been in hiding since June 4 after the government ordered her arrest for insulting Muslim religious feelings by telling India's Statesman newspaper that Islam's holy book, The Koran, should be "revised thoroughly."

Ms. Nasrin later said she was misquoted by the newspaper stood by its report. Information Minister Nazmul Huda said in comments reported in the Inquilab newspaper Friday that a case against Ms. Nasrin on charges of hurting Islamic feelings was still pending at a Dhaka magistrate's court.

"(But) if someone does not appear in court personally, then the defence may not be as strong. In that case she may be convicted," he was quoted as saying.

"Once convicted, she will probably have to go straight into custody when she returns," he said.

Mr. Huda said some fundamentalist groups were trying to gain politically from the Nasrin controversy. "The government will take all measures, by using its own mechanism, to control the situation," he said.

S. Korea braces for showdown with radicals

SEOUL (AFP) — Thousands of South Korean riot police Friday braced for a showdown with radical students intent on staging a North-Korean initiated rally to mark the liberation of the peninsula from Japanese colonial rule.

Pyeonggi slammed Seoul for blocking the rally "in an unpardonable challenge to the ardor desire of the whole nation," warning the crackdown would only aggravate inter-Korean division and confrontation.

"The situation of the Korean peninsula is becoming all the more acute with each passing day due to the anti-communist hysteria of the South Korean rulers," Pyongyang said through its mouthpiece, the Korean Central News Agency.

North Korea has offered to send 10 delegates to Seoul through the truce village of Panmunjom Sunday. South Korea has rejected the offer, accusing Pyongyang of fanning unrest here.

Aug. 15 is celebrated both in North and South Korea as "Liberation Day," marking the end of Japan's colonial rule of the peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

In Seoul, riot police sealed off Hongik University by barricading the school's gates with garbage trucks after some 1,000 radicals from provincial schools gathered there overnight to prepare for the rally.

Groups of radicals with rocks, steel pipes and other ammunition guarded the school's strategic points against possible police raids,

shouting anti-government slogans.

In southern Seoul, another 600 students staged a rally at Seoul National University, denouncing the government's crackdown on "peaceful" pro-unification gatherings.

In the southern city of Kwangju about 300 students scuffled with riot police while trying to move out of Chonnam University campus to the city's main railway station, Yonhap News Agency said.

The radicals have called the "pan-national" rally from Saturday through Monday to coincide with similar gatherings in Pyongyang to promote unification of the divided peninsula.

The Seoul government, as in past years, has banned the gathering as a pro-North Korean action.

Cambodia team to seek hostages' release

PHNOM PENH (R) — The Cambodian army has sent a team of intelligence officers to supervise negotiations with Khmer Rouge guerrillas holding three Western tourists as hostages, a senior staff officer said Friday.

"We've sent our officers to that place — officers from the intelligence bureau," he said. "These negotiations must be conducted very secretly."

The officer, based at Defence Ministry headquarters, said the Khmer Rouge had made no threats to kill the hostages and needed them for protection.

Mark Slater, 28, from Britain, Jean-Michel Braquet, 28, from France, and David Wilson, 29, an Australian, were taken hostage on July 26 after their Kampot-bound train was ambushed by Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

Thirteen people were killed in the attack, the eighth train ambush on the Kampot line in southern Cambodia since 1993. The Khmer Rouge still hold 16 people, including the three Westerners, three ethnic Vietnamese and 10 Cambodians.

The captives are being held at a base called Vine Mountain, about 150 kilometres south of Phnom Penh. The guerrillas are demanding \$45,000 for each of the three Westerners.

The army has been encircling the camp where the three are held, raising fears among Western diplomats for their safety. But a minister said Thursday the government had agreed to negotiate with the rebels about payment of a ransom.

Khmer friends and relatives of the hostages and captors would be used as go-betweens in the negotiations, the officer said.

Police chief's bid to cut Ulster patrols sparks anger

LONDON (AFP) — Protestant Unionists have reacted angrily to a suggestion by Northern Ireland's police chief that army patrols in Ulster might be reduced if the Irish Republican Army (IRA) called a prolonged ceasefire.

A unionist MP said the head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) might have to be replaced.

RUC Chief Constable Hugh Annesley, speaking amid speculation that the IRA might be considering a truce in the coming months, had reiterated Thursday that a ceasefire might allow street patrols to be proportionately reduced.

"If the threat was to tail

down, then the level of overt army patrolling on the streets could be tailed down," said Chief Annesley, who has made similar statements in the past, as has Northern Ireland Secretary Patrick Mahew.

Chief Annesley added, however, that "for anyone to suggest that the army could be removed is naive in the extreme."

Some 19,000 British troops are currently stationed in Northern Ireland, primarily to support the RUC.

Ulster Unionist Party MP Ken Maginnis said Chief Annesley's comments showed he had "outlived his usefulness here" and suggested he might have to stand down.

Mr. Maginnis said Chief Annesley's comments would leave RUC officers feeling humiliated and give the IRA their biggest boost in a year. "If we look at the level of violence in our community," said Mr. Maginnis, "it is ridiculous for the RUC to be parading and pandering to one section of the terrorist population."

Andrew Hunter, a Tory MP and chairman of the Conservative Northern Ireland Committee in the House of Commons, said Chief Annesley's remarks were wrong in timing and substance.

Prime Minister John Major's office declined to associ-

ate itself with Chief Annesley's comments.

The Northern Ireland Office said it supported the spirit of what Chief Annesley had said, although termed his choice of words "unfortunate."

"He is at one with the British and Irish governments," said a spokesman, "and there can be no moves to accommodate the terrorists until there is a permanent end to violence."

This Sunday is the 25th anniversary of British military intervention in Ulster, the official start of the bloody sectarian conflict between Roman Catholics and Protestants that has come to be known as "the troubles."

Sri Lanka rebels attack army camp; 67 dead

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil guerrillas Friday attacked an army camp in eastern Sri Lanka, killing 11 soldiers and losing at least 25 of their own men in fresh blood-letting that has left 67 dead in the island's war-torn regions.

About 100 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas stormed the Kad-

dumuvikulam army base located in thick jungles in eastern Batticaloa district and simultaneously attacked two other nearby camps, officials said.

"Troops, though taken by surprise, were able to rapidly reorganise and carry out a quick counterattack on the terrorists forcing them to

withdraw after a firefight lasting approximately two hours," a Defence Ministry statement said.

"Troops searched the area and 25 terrorist bodies were recovered. A very large number of terrorists are likely to have suffered casualties. During the attack 11 soldiers

were killed and five were wounded," the statement said.

The LTTE guerrillas had kept the nearby camps of Thirukomadamu and Kathiraveli under a barrage of mortar fire to prevent army reinforcements reaching the besieged base, military officials said.

Health delays signal more problems for Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — Reeling from a blow to a crime bill considered crucial to democratic prospects in November elections, congressional Democrats face a grim battle and worrisome delays in their health reform initiative.

President Bill Clinton, who has made the crime and health bills the pillars of his White House, urged Congress to stay in session through its recess to grapple with both of them.

"I don't think they ought to go home. You know, the people who are committing these crimes are not going to take a vacation," said Mr. Clinton. "Health care is not going to take a vacation either."

Thursday night, a tired-looking trio of Democratic congressional leaders emerged from a lengthy closed-door meeting and announced they had reached the same conclusion.

"We're going to be in (Friday) and most of next week on the crime bill," said House Speaker Thomas Foley of Washington state. He added that the House will start the health care debate, which had been slated to begin next Monday, as soon as the required congressional budget office data is ready.

But Mr. Foley said he does not know how long the House will have to wait for the budget reports and did not rule out having the House on a quasi-recess in which they would technically be in session but would actually be free to go back to their districts and be "on call."

And several members of the House have voiced worries that any further delay in

the health debate, even for technical budget reasons, could further damage prospects of mustering the 218 votes needed to pass a bill acceptable to Mr. Clinton and the Democratic leadership.

The Senate Friday starts a fourth day of debate on majority leader George Mitchell's health bill.

Sen. Mitchell said he hopes lawmakers can finally move away from the speeches that customarily mark the opening of debate and start dealing with the nuts and bolts of amendments that will determine what stays in the plan.

Procedural issues over the timing of votes, though sometimes seeming petty on the surface, mask serious power struggles over the course of the Senate debate, which in turn shapes the message the Senate can send to a skittish House.

In addition to being disheartened by the crime vote, some House members are wary of lending support to the controversial requirement that employers pay for most of their workers' insurance.

Ben Cardin of Maryland, a Democrat who strongly backs health care reform, said he does not think a brief delay to wait for budget numbers would be damaging but fears a lengthy postponement would be "a major mistake."

"We've got to get through this stage," he emphasised.

Republicans, however, have been pushing for delay all along. Peter Hoekstra, a Michigan Republican, said the House should not try to complete in the next eight days work that he believes requires eight weeks.

Both the House and the Senate bills are extremely complicated, and at some point there will simply not be enough time to debate the 1,400-page bills, reconcile their different components in conference, and bring the combined version back to the House and Senate before congressional elections in November.

Reform advocates toiled in Senate speeches to get beyond the political battles and talk about how the bill would help sick people get the care they need.

Harry Reid of Nevada, for instance, told a moving story about a 29-year-old woman on the brink of death in a hospice. She had no insurance and could not get the treatment that might have saved her life, he said.

But fellow Democrats, like Bob Kerrey of Nebraska and David Boren of Oklahoma, bitterly attacked the Senate bill.

"Let's not ram something through on a party line basis," said an angry Sen. Boren. He objected to passing a law that would trigger new requirements under unknown circumstances eight years from now and urged lawmakers to "go back to the drawing board" and "show some common sense."

House rejects crime bill

Meanwhile, President Clinton presses his battle for a \$30-billion crime bill Friday, a day after gun-control opponents, House Republicans and some fellow Democrats combined to deal him the biggest legislative defeat of his presidency.

Mr. Clinton, visibly shaken after the surprise setback in

Congress, was to fly to Minneapolis Friday for a hastily arranged speech plugging the bill at a National Police Association meeting.

On Thursday, lawmakers rejected, 225 to 210, a procedural resolution that would have cleared the way for final action on the omnibus anti-legislation.

With midterm elections less than three months away, the defeat was particularly galling for Clinton because 58 Democrats defied him to join all but 11 Republicans. Until the final moment, Mr. Clinton's allies in Capitol Hill had predicted approval by one or two votes.

House Democratic leaders announced late Thursday they would immediately undertake another push for passage.

Shortly after the defeat, Mr. Clinton told a White House news conference the loss was "disheartening" because, he said, 225 members of the House decided to "participate in a procedural trick."

"I worked my heart out on it," he said. "I did everything I could, and on this day the NRA (National Rifle Association) and the Republican leadership had their way."

The NRA had campaigned against the bill's provisions outlawing 19 assault-style weapons. Republicans had complained about its \$7 billion in crime prevention programmes on the ground they were duplicative and ineffective.

Mr. Clinton said he wanted Congress to find ways to salvage key elements of the package of police, prevention and punishment measures.

Japan company not lionising new Disney film

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Tezuka Production Co. Ltd. said it plans to ask Walt Disney Co. to admit that its box office hit The Lion King was influenced by the work of late Japanese cartoonist Osamu Tezuka. "I wouldn't call it plagiarism, but I want them to at least admit that they had Tezuka's work in mind when making the film," said Takayuki Matsutani, the president of the company which administers the copyright on Tezuka's works. But Matsutani insisted he had no plans to sue Disney. "Legal disputes do not help better understanding between Japan and the United States," he said. Disney denied Monday that The Lion King was influenced by Kimba the White Lion, a 1960s cartoon television series created by Tezuka, who is also known for another series called Astro Boy. Both the Tezuka and Disney stories focus on orphaned lion princes who lose their crowns to a wicked adult lion and then reclaim their thrones. The Disney lion is named Simba. Japanese cartoonists and other fans of Tezuka, who is revered in Japan in much the same way as Disney, have been seeking action against Disney. Matsutani initially planned to remain silent, based on the wishes of the late Japanese cartoonist's family. But "his fans were not satisfied, he said, explaining why he had decided to take action. Japanese cartoonist Machiko Satomura plans to send a letter to Disney, accusing the Hollywood entertainment giant of undermining Kimba, which is known in Japan as "The Jungle Emperor."

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Last Friday NATO jets destroyed a Serb anti-tank gun after the Serbs stole five heavy weapons from another U.N. collection point. They subsequently returned the arms.

Major Dacre Holloway said the Serbs took a 105 mm gun and ammunition from a collection point at Krivovljani, northwest of Sarajevo, and switched it with a 76mm gun.

Troops from UNPROFOR's Ukrainian contingent discovered the trick and recovered the larger gun after several hours of negotiations, he said.

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Mother of all blunders

THE ALGERIAN Islamists have committed the mother of all blunders by issuing threats to students and teachers to abandon schools and universities in that country. Such ultimatums to high school and university students as well as their mentors will naturally hurt the cause of the Islamists who were betting on wider popular support to their cause. This clearly counter-productive step was taken after so many months of strife marked by violence.

In retrospect the Islamists enjoyed greater support not only from within the country but also from the outside world when they were arbitrarily deprived from reaping the results of democratically-held elections more than two years ago. There were many voices which sounded the alarm then about ending the democratisation process in the North African country only because the outcome indicated that the fundamentalists were gaining in the elections.

But to translate this setback to democracy into first violence and then to a full-fledged fight against education is doubly dangerous. How can any political party expect to enjoy support from the people when it decides to take on students and teachers? What future awaits Algeria without proper education for its future generations? Any interruption in the educational process, even if confined to high school and university, is of dire consequence to the national interest of the whole country. The damage could be irreversible and the Islamists do not seem to comprehend the damage that it is doing to itself as well as to Algeria by its latest threats against teachers and students.

We still think the solution to Algeria's conflict lies in meaningful and sincere dialogue among the different forces that make up that nation. We believe that the Islamists are entitled to their say in governing just like anybody else. Still no political party has the right to have a monopoly on power in any given country. Democracy is not democracy if it is not pluralistic first and foremost. This much the "Islamists" do not seem to respect. Winning elections cannot be used as an excuse to impose a uniform socio-political system on the people. The Islamists therefore, must commit themselves to democracy for now and for always. At the same time the Algerian government must show more willingness to share power with those elements that are not on the same wavelength with it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i discussed the peace process noting that since Jordan is a democracy where everyone has the right to talk about the issue of peace with Israel and to contemplate over the outcome of the negotiations. Bassam Emoush, a member of Parliament, also said that participation in the peace process should be the decision of the Jordanian people, their government and their representatives in Parliament rather than a single person's decision. He said that the decision should be a national one so that no party can be blamed should the talks fail and no one can claim the glory for any success. The peace negotiations in their present status, the writer said, focused on secondary matters, leaving the substance untouched and postponed indefinitely. Emoush said that no-one has gained anything from the talks so far except the Israelis who gave the Arabs mere promises which no one can guarantee would ever be honoured. The writer said that despite the lapse of three years since the Madrid conference, no land was returned and the status of Jerusalem still hangs in the balance though the Arabs went to the negotiations on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Furthermore, the United States, which claims to be the sponsor of peace talks, has not taken any steps towards stripping Israel of its mass destruction weapons.

TAHER AL UDWAN, a columnist in Al Dustour, reflected on statements given by Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin immediately after the Aqaba meeting that the question of Palestinian refugees was never mentioned neither was the issue contained in the Washington Declaration. Furthermore, said the writer, Rabin told a press conference that the borders with Jordan had never been demarcated before denying the fact that they were delineated under the British mandate. If these words were said just to appease the Israeli opposition one can overlook their meaning for the present moment, but if they were not then it is only reasonable to say that such attitude can by no means be conducive to peace with Jordan, said the writer. The Jordanian-Israeli agenda signed in Washington in September provides for the discussions and the settlement of the Palestinian refugees question in a satisfactory manner and the agenda can by no means conflict with the Washington Declaration, and so the refugee question is very much alive, noted Udwan.

Jordanian Perspective

Streamlining the internal scene

By Dr. Musa Keilani

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's directive on Wednesday to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to lead Jordan to the new era at the head of a Royal Commission capped another week of dramatic events that took Jordan and Jordanians on major leaps in contemporary history.

The Royal directive has to be seen in the very broad perspective of the changes in the Middle East political scene after the historic Washington Declaration and the fast pace of burying some of the features of the 46-year state of war that existed between Jordan and Israel. The two countries have now open telephone lines, a new crossing in the south and another is planned soon, plans are being shaped to link the Israeli and Jordanian national power grids, the flow of people is being facilitated, Israel has started pumping water to Jordan as a goodwill gesture, Israeli-Jordanian air links are being discussed and the King is expected to visit Hebron and Jerusalem soon in his capacity as a Hashemite Arab Muslim and guardian of the Holy Shrines there.

Against the backdrop of those measures and events which have more of an external facet, the internal scene also has to be streamlined and prepared to meet the challenges of the new era of peace.

The Royal directive has to be seen in this context. It is no secret that for many years, Jordan's bureaucratic scene under different prime ministers and governments has been characterised by inefficiency and corruption.

Precious public resources were wasted on white elephant projects to the benefit of a few. Mismanagement and lethargy have been the main features of public service. On many occasions, qualified people have been brushed aside to make room for those with waste, and nepotism and favoritism plagued the scene.

Indeed, with the economic shock of 1988-89, things changed, and we have made large strides in streamlining most sectors of the economy. But that streamlining had only been relative and fell far below the desired target of turning Jordan into a country where efficiency and devotion mark public services, where the private sector gets preferential treatment and things get done fast. The change in the situation was more or less limited to the essential necessities of meeting the requirements of the economic restructuring programme agreed with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and its affiliates.

Our successful democratisation process aside, the steps that were undertaken on the ground since 1989 left a lot to be desired in terms of raising the level of bureaucratic efficiency and commitment to responsibilities on the national level. That is not to say that we have not made progress, but that progress was limited to the immediate needs which could not be set aside if only because of the pressure that we faced from outside.

No doubt, government servants were and are doing their job at varying degrees of efficiency and seriousness, but just that. And that is where the problem lies — a trend to retain the traditional basic approaches to issues rather than moving away from tradition and adopting new visions.

I could see some people gritting their teeth and swearing at me for saying it and raising all kinds of counter-arguments. But that does not change the reality that the nature of our bureaucracy and public sector has not come anywhere near a level that should propel our country on the road towards self-reliance let alone towards becoming another success story such as we hear from the Far East.

The nation-building skills of our people need no testimony. A close look at the Gulf states is all that is needed to show how our people could be innovative bureaucrats while being sensitive to the needs of the society and how they could be intelligent businessmen.

Now, at the juncture of history where we are on our way to getting rid of the burdens and political and economic preoccupation with a conflict that plagued us for nearly four decades, we have to be well-prepared to meet the challenges that face a people who seek to break free from the senseless chains that tie us down and limit our vision.

To those who argue that Jordan and Jordanians are no different from other Third World countries, I ask two simple questions: Is it enough to sit back and do little and say that we are not different? Isn't it our duty to ourselves and the society at large to do something about changing ourselves by drawing from the experiences of other Third World countries and avoiding the pitfalls that have made the Third World remain Third World?

We have no dearth of human resources; nor do we lack entrepreneurship. But are they used in the right channels and right direction? Are they allowed to flourish with encouragement and help from those who are in charge of

our economy?

The most significant feature that distinguishes Jordan from the loose definition of the Third World is that the Kingdom is going to find itself under a large international magnifying glass in the wake of the breakthroughs in the peace process and the economic opportunities that a peaceful region offers.

We simply cannot afford to be seen as a society where ill-conceived notions of bureaucracy and civil service inhibit national growth not only by placing constraints on our private sector but also on innovative skills. On the contrary we have to put in a lot of extra effort with a new vision towards meeting the objective of projecting the right image to the international community that Jordan indeed is the best place in the Middle East to launch investments. We have to show the world that we are indeed different from other Third World countries if only because of our innovativeness and openness.

And His Majesty has named the right man to lead us to this objective by taking the bull by its horns and turning it around by proceeding further in creating the "right social, political, intellectual and economic fabric of our lives."

The far-sightedness and vision of Crown Prince Hassan have been time tested, and one cannot think of anyone else in Jordan better suited to do the job in whatever qualities and skills that take to make a success of the huge task of bringing about fundamental changes in approaches in all walks of our life.

From whatever vantage point, there is very little, if any, contradiction between our social and cultural traditions and setting the stage that offers our country as the right conduit to anyone to Middle East economy and business as well as tourism. Of course that does not mean we open our beaches to nudists and allow our coasts to be the playground for international playboys and girls. Certain lines have to be drawn and respected, and that is a point businessmen from anywhere in the world understand.

Indeed, the challenges that face His Royal Highness are tremendous. What he confronts is a maze of criss-crossing "traditions" that have little to do with our culture and society and practices which will resist change. But then that is the nature of any society and should be overcome with firm steps and resolution, two of the many qualities that the Crown Prince is well-known for.

Fast race to peace leaves media breathless

Reviewed by
Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL newspapers focused in the past week on the implementation of the Washington Declaration embodied in the opening of the Araba border crossing and the meeting in Aqaba between King Hussein and the Israeli prime minister. These events mark the start of implementing the Washington Declaration and the removal of all barriers of hatred and enmity between the two sides.

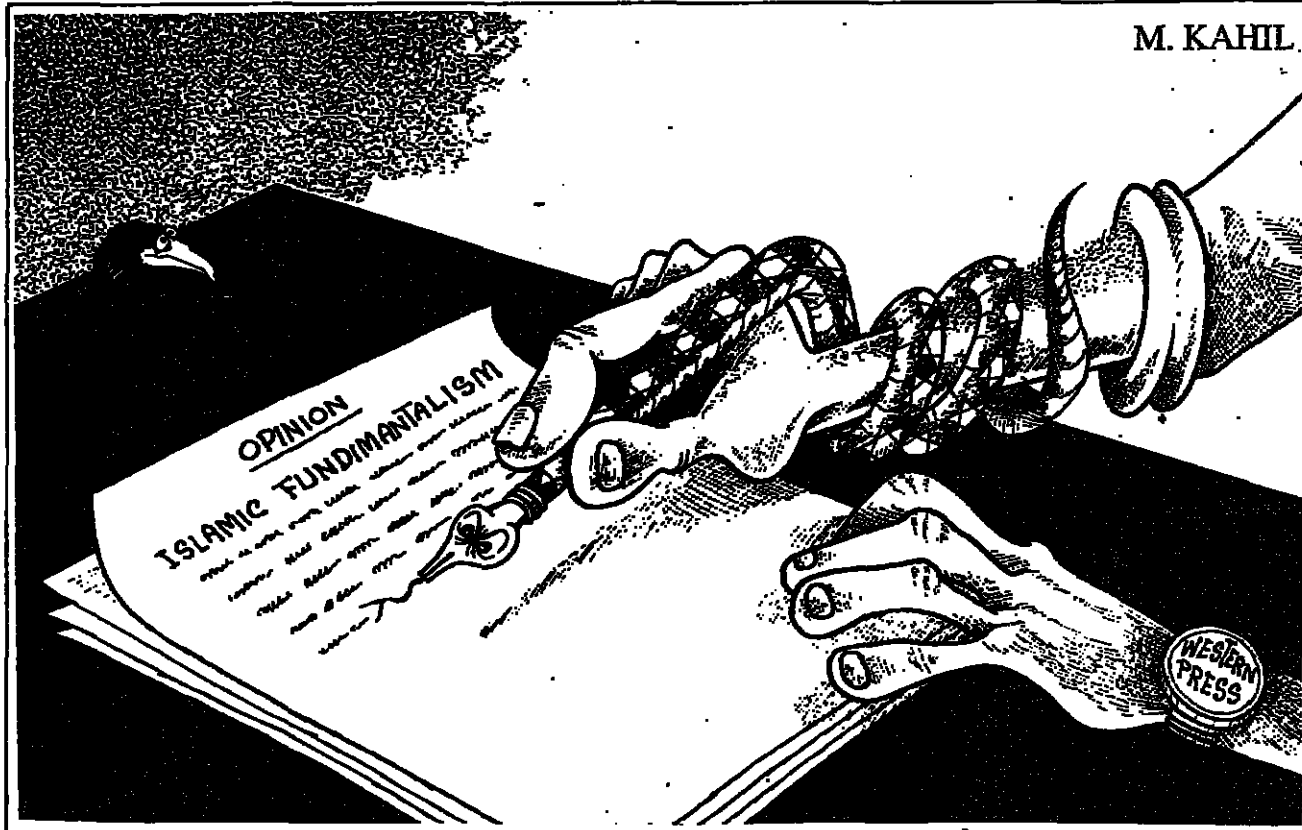
The King-Rabin meeting in Aqaba and the opening of the border crossing, said Al Dustour daily, are great political events. These events mark the start of implementing the Washington Declaration and the removal of all barriers of hatred and enmity between the two sides.

Sawt Al Shaab daily described the opening of the border crossing as a translation of the intentions expressed in the Washington Declaration which in turn was based on the concept of the Jordanian-Israeli common agenda. The opening of the crossing point also marks the beginning of the demarcation of common borders which, the paper said, is a clear Israeli recognition of the Kingdom's rights to its lands and water resources.

In the view of Ahmad Al Mieleh, a columnist in Al Ra'i, the events of the past week fall within the framework of a series of events which began with the conclusion of the Egyptian-Israeli peace pact.

The current events are historic in nature as they mark the end of an era of conflicts in the region and is one in which the people of the Middle East find themselves passing through a turning point and a transitional period of time, said the writer.

The developments in the Middle East, he added, can also be described as part of



M. KAHIL

a series of events that came in the wake of the downfall of the Soviet bloc and happening under the overwhelming sole superpower now dominating the affairs of the world.

Youssef Bouran, a columnist in Al Ra'i, described the present stage in the Middle East history as one fraught with serious challenge for every one. Dealing with our Israeli neighbour, said the writer, requires very high-quality performance on the part of the negotiators themselves and the Jordanian people at large who, the writer said, should not show fear and apprehension but rather a high sense of responsibility and united ranks.

As we realise that Israel has defeated us militarily, said the writer, we ought to work hard to win the battle in our dealings with the Jewish state in obtaining our lawful rights.

Three factors can deter-

mine the fate of the peace process in our region, said Saleh Al Qallab in Al Dustour. The peace process should involve all parties, including Syria and Lebanon, otherwise any deals with Israel will be incomplete, he said.

Second, Arab citizens should concretely feel the benefits of the coming peace politically, socially and economically and third,

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Israel should stop its present aggressive and repressive policies against the Palestinians and the Arab citizens and should stop stealing Arab land and water resources, said the writer.

If the Palestinians continue to feel humiliated by the Israelis, all deals aiming towards a settlement would remain meaningless and futile, added Qallab.

Taher Al Udwan, another columnist in Al Dustour, said that with the visit to Aqaba by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Jordan and Israel have taken the first steps towards political, economic and touristic normalisation.

Although these fast-moving events are being slowly absorbed by the Jordanian man in the street, one can say that the process

of peace making is quite impossible to hold back any more and one has to accept the concept that Jordan is heading for a genuine peace that can guarantee its legitimate rights.

However, said the writer, while Jordan and the Arabs have offered so much, Israel has offered very little, something which does not contribute towards assuring the people about the future of peace.

Tareq Masarweh tackled the question of holy places in Jerusalem noting that Jordan's success in assuming the role of supervising and caring for these places is a service to the whole Islamic Nation.

The columnist who writes for Al Ra'i daily, said that Jordan does not compete with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) over the sovereignty on Jerusalem. Criticising Saudi Arabia for trying to fuel the PLO's uneasiness resulting from Jordan's success to keep the holy places under its custody, the writer said that the Palestinians should rest assured that Jordan does not harbour any ill intentions but will remain an ally of the Palestinian people.

Sultan Al Hattab discussed the same theme, criticising those who create points of difference between Jordan and the PLO before the end of the Israeli occupation. Jordan, said

the columnist for Al Ra'i daily, has held the responsibility of caring for the holy places before and during the Israeli occupation of the holy city and this responsibility does not infringe on that of the Palestinian political and geographic responsibility for the city. Indeed, the holy places, said the writer, should serve as a catalyst for fusing solidarity among the Arabs and the Muslim nations.

A columnist in Al Ra'i mentioned the complaints of the Jordanian farmers concerning their marketing of their produce and the plight of those who produce tomatoes in great quantities but fail to earn the cost of their production.

Youssef Al Ghazu said that the Ministry of Agriculture and its affiliated departments are to be commended for their research and other efforts to help the farmers produce better crops but nothing has been done to date to help the farmers market their products at home and abroad.

The ministry ought to interfere to determine the cropping patterns in Jordan and should help the farmers grow crops in a balanced manner and in quantities that are certain to find their way to the market, said the writer.

Mohammad Sabeithi, a columnist in Al Dustour, demanded that the Social Security Corporation introduce measures to ensure people against unemployment. There is need for special legislation that would conform to the provisions of the constitution that guaranteed the right of all people to work, said Sabeithi.

The writer said that the government ought to establish a special fund to finance the project through collections from the working workforce for the benefit of the unemployed and the needy. He said an additional tax can also be created to fund this vital project for the community.

Security forces in front line of Northern Ireland's 'troubles'

By Caroline Brothers
Reuters

BELFAST — For the security forces caught up in Northern Ireland's 25 years of conflict, the toll makes grim reading.

Nearly 1,000 members of the police and army in the province have been killed and 13,000 wounded as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) wages its campaign to end British rule.

As the most prominent targets in the political and sectarian strife, euphemistically known as "the troubles", they account for almost a third of the victims of one of the world's most

deep-rooted conflicts.

More than 3,000 people have been killed and 36,000 wounded in the battle between the IRA fighting to unify Ireland and Protestant extremists determined to prevent it.

"The police and army are holding the ring, preventing death and injury among the two communities, until someone comes up with a political solution that allows the people of this island to live together," Chief Superintendent Jim Boyd told Reuters.

"There really is no military solution," he said in an interview at Belfast's Brooklyn barracks, head-

quarters of Northern Ireland's Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

In the 1960s the RUC was a sleepy police force of 3,000 officers dealing with break-ins and petty crime.

Today it is four times that size, backed by 17,000 British soldiers, and has expertise ranging from combatting terrorism to tackling organised crime.

Three soldiers with automatic weapons protect each police officer on the beat. Bullet-proof arm vehicles patrol nearly every town.

The two forces work in tandem to combat extremist groups on both sides of the province's sectarian di-

vide and have gained world-class expertise in the process.

"We do everything that any other police force does — lost dogs, missing children, burglaries, thefts of cars," Mr. Boyd said.

"But on top of all that we have to be aware we could be walking into a situation where gunmen are waiting or booby traps laid."

Car crashes and explosions have lured police to booby-trapped scenes — bodies found dumped in leafy lanes are left lying for hours while disposal experts comb the area for mines.

During the past 25 years, extremist violence in Northern Ireland has undergone several mutations. "Terror shifts and terrorists don't employ the same tactics all the time," said Mr. Boyd, who's been with the RUC for 32 years.

"In the early seventies we were facing street disturbances, lots of shooting incidents and bombs going off all the time — and a lot of the killing was indiscriminate," he said.

"Then in the early eighties it was recognised that terrorism is a very fancy word — and really what we're talking about is very well organised crime."

He said both the IRA and the Protestant extremists needed extensive funds to buy arms and ammunition, pay activists and support the relatives of prisoners who are ineligible for state funds.

"Organised crime, to flourish, needs finance," he said. "Our experts in anti-racketeering would claim the IRA needs somewhere in the region of seven million pounds (\$11 million) to run their organisation each year, and the loyalists (those fighting to keep Northern Ireland part of Britain) about four million (\$6 million)."

West, Islam on collision course in new world

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

BRUSSELS — The West and Islam, struggling with centuries of mutual hostility and misunderstanding, seem to be on a new collision course as the millennium approaches.

The tragedy, experts say, is that it need not be so. Now that the all-embracing struggle between communism and capitalism is over, rich Western nations are worried by the growing influence of Muslim militants in countries like Algeria, Egypt, Iran and Bangladesh.

It is fashionable to talk about the new "crucible of crisis." What if vital oil supplies are cut off? What if one of these countries gets a nuclear bomb? If Algeria turns fundamentalist, will other Muslim countries also fall, bringing a flood of poor immigrants to Europe?

Killings in Algeria and Egypt, allegations that Iran is behind terror campaigns, persecution of writers and dissidents, and the obvious delay the Western-style democracy to take root in many Muslim countries — all of these things trouble the West.

Many of the world's predominantly Muslim countries in areas like Northern Africa and the Middle East are poor. Militancy is fuelled by long-standing resentment against Western colonialism, by poverty and anger with inefficient or corrupt regimes.

In the Middle East, where the peace process is fast changing the political map and bypassing radicals on all sides, there are fears that extremists could step up terror attacks following the recent bombing of Jewish

targets in Britain and Argentina.

"We are heading for trouble because of misunderstanding and misperceptions," said Heiko Kopietz, an independent consultant with detailed knowledge of Islamic culture.

"Islam is not a threat to Western civilisation but the West does not understand Islam," he told Reuters.

The two sides seem entrenched in their attitudes, conditioned by past conflicts, cultural differences and the growing gap between the world's rich and poor.

The Middle Ages were filled with battles between Christians and Muslims — from the Moorish invasion of Spain to the bloody Crusades. In more recent times, Western colonial powers exploited and colonised the Muslim World.

After World War II, many Muslim countries became little more than pawns in the cold war superpower game. However, experts argue that the perception of a new threat to the West is based largely on misunderstanding, fuelled by media and governments prone to oversimplifying complex issues and fearful of what they do not understand.

The phrase "Islamic fundamentalism" conjures images of rabid crowds, the export of terrorism, summary executions, a lack of individual and press freedom and the subjugation of women.

But Mr. Kopietz and others say Islam is essentially a peace-loving religion based on respect for others, a view taken by the vast majority of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims.

As with any other religion, there are numerous factions

and vigorous debate about the meaning of holy writings and the role of Islam in modern societies, even within the Islamic nations.

The idea of a worldwide Islamic threat is a modern Western concept, created by the West and reinforced by the West's own actions, it is limited by its own logic.

"Although there is a real influence throughout the region, its policies are economic and constrained by the economic difficulties," the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said in its latest annual survey.

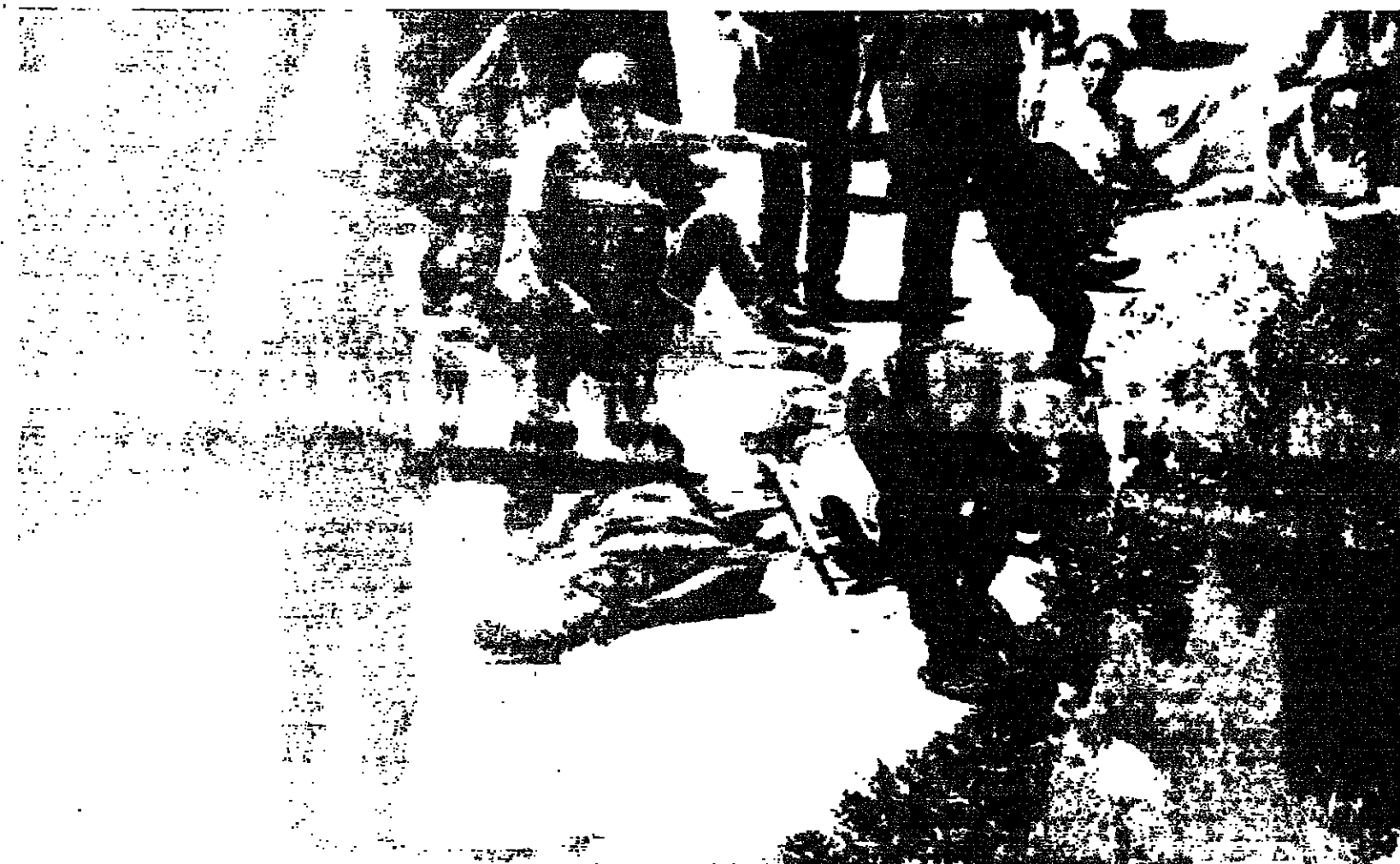
Dilip Hiro, author of a recent book on Islamic fundamentalism, wrote this week in a British newspaper that the West was the guilty of hypocrisy on a massive scale — something which has further angered the Muslims.

Countries such as the United States, Britain and France have professed support for democracy and have been outraged by the Iranian "fatwa" seeking the death of British author Salman Rushdie for alleged blasphemy against Islam.

But they have also turned a blind eye to the Algerian government's cancellation of elections after the first round in 1992.

Washington and others have also all but ignored the democratic deficit in the production of Gulf Arab states, which spend billions of dollars on sophisticated military hardware.

Muslims argue that the West has a long history of exploiting the weak and the poor, and that the West's actions are a direct result of its own greed.



Algerian extremists more daring, as government founders

Algerian extremists more daring, as government founders

Algeria's new government, formed by the end of the Algerian civil war in 1992, is facing a new wave of extremism. The government is struggling to maintain its authority over the country, which has been plagued by violence and instability since the war ended.

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Jordan and Israel resume talks on Jordan's

(Continued from page 1)

progress in cooperation in energy and tourism.

Israeli Energy Corporation Director-General Moshe Katz met with his counterpart from the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) and agreed to "advance plans to link the two countries' electricity networks." The linkage, according to plans, will help each other during peak-hour demands.

The linkage is expected to come at three points; one in the north, one near the Dead Sea and another further down near the newly opened Araba Crossing near Aqaba and Eilat.

There was no immediate confirmation from Jordan. But the Jerusalem Post said Jordanian and Israeli technicians were scheduled to meet next week at a site called Soom to discuss the matter.

Jordan and Israel also agreed that the tourism ministries of the two countries would cooperate on joint marketing of tourism packages including sites in both countries, the report said.

said, adding that a group of Jordanian tourism experts were to meet with Israeli counterparts next week to present details of the Kingdom's tourist attractions.

Informed sources told the Jordan Times on Wednesday that Tourism Minister Mohammad Al Adwan was expected to meet with his Israeli counterpart at the "Araba Crossing" point inaugurated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Aug. 8.

The Israeli minister of tourism initiated the meeting by inviting Dr. Adwan to Israel. Dr. Adwan turned down the invitation saying it was premature for him to visit Israel, the sources said. The Araba Crossing site was apparently agreed as a compromise.

It was expected that the negotiators at the Dead Sea would also decide soon on a new crossing point further north of the Araba Crossing soon as called for in the Washington Declaration.

Debt deal

The U.S. Congress has approved a \$1.8-billion foreign aid bill that includes relief for Jordan as part of the peace process.

The two largest recipients of U.S. aid were Israel and Egypt, which received \$1.1 billion and \$2.1 billion.

The foreign aid bill includes \$220 million as the first installment in President Clinton's pledge to wipe out the 700-million-dollar debt owed by Jordan.

The remainder of the debt was to be scrapped according to progress made in implementing the July 25 Washington Declaration.

"This is a step, one initial step, taken with Democrats and Republicans agree that it would promote the peace process in the Middle East," said Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy.

The draft, which passed the House of Representatives on Aug. 4, was approved in the Senate by a vote of 81 to 12.

Palestinians to co-administer crossings

(Continued from page 1)

Israel will administer the other section designated for Israeli and visitors to the rest of the West Bank and to Israel.

Dr. Shaath said about 100 Palestinian officials, including policemen, passport inspectors and tax officials, would take over the Palestinian section of the terminals as of Aug. 21.

He said the two sides have agreed to build another terminal in Rafah within six months that would be able to handle five times the current capacity.

About 200,000 passengers travel between Egypt and Gaza every year, Dr. Shaath said. Hundreds of thousands mainly Palestinians, also travel across the King Hussein Bridge, the main crossing point between the West Bank and Jordan.

"I expect this terminal to handle not only 200,000 passengers a year. I expect it to handle millions a year because this is the gateway that will bring not only Palestinians in the thousands but also ... other Arab tourists who now will come because there is a Palestine starting here in Gaza and in Jericho," Dr. Shaath said.

There was no PLO reaction meanwhile to a warning by Mr. Rabin on Wednesday that reported comments by the head of the PLO's foreign affairs department, Farouk Kaddoumi, violated the Israel-PLO peace accord and would harm the peace deal if repeated.

Israel's Itim news agency

had reported Mr. Kaddoumi called for Israel's destruction in a speech made at the closing of the PLO's radio operations in North Africa on Monday.

Mr. Rabin, in a joint news conference with Mr. Arafat in Gaza at which the two announced they would accelerate implementation of their peace agreement, warned statements like Mr. Kaddoumi's would be an obstacle to implementing the accord.

"We cannot accept that a senior man in the leadership of the PLO rises up and speaks against the existence of the state of Israel. It is unthinkable and if repeated it will be a serious obstacle to the progress of the present process," Mr. Rabin said.

Mr. Arafat reiterated his commitment to the peace deal and said Mr. Kaddoumi's comments did not reflect the PLO's position.

"This is his (Kaddoumi's) point of view, not that of the PLO. I am looking into it now," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Kaddoumi opposes the Israel-PLO peace deal but has not resigned over it.

Itim quoted Mr. Kaddoumi as saying: "There is a state which was established through historical forces and it must be destroyed. This is the Palestinian way. They seized our land."

Mr. Rabin said the statement violated the Israel-PLO mutual recognition agreement that preceded the peace accord. He demanded the PLO set a firm date for convening its national council to amend the PLO charter.

In the peace deal, Mr. Arafat committed to amending sections of the charter that Israel felt called for its destruction. The Palestinian National Council is to meet in Gaza to decide on amending the charter but no date has been set for the meeting.

Mr. Arafat later told Reuters: "We are still committed to what we agreed upon with the Israelis, especially concerning the letter (of recognition) we have exchanged."

Israelis warn Palestinian police

(Continued from page 12)

Jerusalem.

Israel is concerned Palestinians are trying to set up a quasi-national presence in Jerusalem and has vowed to particularly to closely monitor activities at Orient House.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said Israel will not allow the Palestinian authority to conduct business in Jerusalem.

A police spokesman said on Thursday Israel had agreed to permit Dr. Shaath to visit Muslim holy shrines.

"Dr. Shaath is not coming to Jerusalem wherever he would like, there is no problem, there are no objections," said Police Minister Moshe Shaleh before meeting Dr. Shaath in Gaza earlier on Friday morning.

used.

The killings were followed by threats against France, and against Algerian students and teachers returning in September to state high schools and universities, which they called centres of terrorism.

The radical fundamentalists have made substantial progress in isolating the government.

"The French government refused to abandon its former colony after last week's attack — a grouping of its remaining nationals in more easily defended strongholds — the Netherlands responded by closing its embassy and Belgium ordered its citizens to leave."

The United States remains but has cut down trees around its embassy to help spot potential threats.

Remaining foreigners, reduced mostly to diplomats, company workers and various contractors, face constant danger and need armed protection to travel.

The government is losing ground, literally. Areas of its vast North African country, larger than France, Ger-

many and Spain combined, are now largely autonomous.

Police venture to the urban strongholds of Islamic extremists only in great forces or at all. Attacks on guerrilla bands in the Aurès Mountains are made only by aircraft.

In the Kabylie, the mountainous region east of Algiers, ethnic Berbers have formed self-defense groups to beat back forays by fundamentalists seeking to seize village arms.

As the bodies of the Frenchmen killed last week were given state honours in Paris, Algerian Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi called for yet another meeting of political parties for a dialogue on ending the crisis.

But many were likely to boycott, and the leaders that really count — those of the Islamic Salvation Front — were uninvited, in jail.

The offer was unlikely to sway the Armed Islamic Group, which claimed responsibility for the attack against the French.

The most radical Islamic faction, it said the group's holy warriors carried out the

attack against a housing block sheltered by Jews and Christians that was allocated by the government to apostate and infidels.

Algerian fundamentalists claim the government is tearing themselves apart in internal factional fighting.

The Armed Islamic Group attacked the French compound two days after police found the body of one of its leaders and nine followers shot to death in a cave.

But the Islamic groups insist they are united with Algerians in seeking an Islamic state.

There is no way to accurately measure support for extremism, or the government that promised a "transition" to democracy within three years.

But in a eerie echo of France's Algerian war, when Paris insisted that the nationalists were an insignificant minority before finally granting independence in 1962, French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua claimed: "There is no support among the Algerian masses for the terrorist elements."

Britain battles chemical, biological horrors of war

By Paul McJannet
Reuters

LONDON — Clutching a bottle of the simulated nerve agent VX in his left hand, Graham Pearson said: "There is enough in here to kill 50,000 people."

But the bottle in his right hand represented an even more chilling threat: "This is simulated tularemia — a bacterium that, if delivered in the right conditions, could infect everyone in the world."

In a post-cold war era of regional conflicts around the globe, chemical and biological warfare are cheaper to launch than nuclear attacks and could, with growing expertise, offer a deadly new scenario of plagues, gases and killer viruses.

Dr. Pearson's job, as the head of Britain's Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment, is to halt their spread and defend troops against two of the deadliest and most feared weapons of war known to man.

The establishment works on everything from respirator masks and chemical detectors to vaccines and arms control. With a team of 600 ranging from veterinarians to mathematicians, it acts as an antidote to armageddon.

He says his establishment is more vital now than ever before: "Chemical or biological warfare is seen as a way toward the poor man's atomic bomb."

"We have to continue to be alert. I worry about regional conflicts because it could be easier for smaller

countries to obtain chemical and biological weapons. They need less sophisticated technology than a nuclear programme. It's cheaper too."

"Anthrax, sprayed from the back of an aircraft on a cool, calm night, could take out all of Washington D.C. This could cause up to three million fatalities compared to two million from a hydrogen bomb," he said, citing one U.S. report.

Dr. Pearson, lauding international cooperation with the U.S., Canada and Australia, preaches the need for "a web of deterrence" — protective measures, intrusive arms controls, a concerted international response to cheaters and broad export controls.

"Ten nations are assessed as having biological weapons programmes and almost twice that number have, or are aiming to acquire chemical weapons," he said.

On chemical weapons, a recent U.S. study pointed the finger of suspicion at several Middle Eastern and North African countries from Israel to Libya as well as North Korea, Taiwan and China.

Dr. Pearson said: "Russia has a formidable chemical warfare capability — 40,000 tonnes is what they say they have."

The Chemical Weapons Convention was opened for signature last year. More than 150 countries have now signed it and it is due to enter into international force next January.

Britain is among those leading international efforts to strengthen verification measures under the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

The establishment at Porton Down was set up in 1916 during World War I when chlorine and gas were first used by Germany against British troops. By the end of the war, 180,000 were injured and 8,000 killed by chemicals.

Ironically, the legacy of that horror is a natural paradise — the establishment was set up in 7,000 acres (2,830 hectares) of chalk grasslands in southern England which have remained virtually untouched since then.

Scientists fight chemical and biological warfare in a habitat that boasts more butterfly species than anywhere else in Britain. Stone Curlews, grassland spiders and 35 billion ants thrive in a haven for conservationists.

"People are surprised. They expect everything here to be dead," Dr. Pearson says, gazing out at rolling grasslands bathed in summer sunshine.

That makes the contrast even more stark when he takes visitors on a tour to see how far preventive measures have evolved over the years.

He shows off a black veil — "the soldier's uniform of the cloth and used it to cover their nose and mouth," he said of the first shaky attempts in 1916.

The room is full of hooded ghosts of past agonies — vacant eyepieces stare out from gas masks ranging from the primitive to today's \$10 with its sophisticated speech transmitter. It was the preferred choice of reporters in the Gulf war against Iraq.

Dollar punished as mark reigns supreme

LONDON (R) — The dollar extended losses against a rampant mark Friday and looks vulnerable to a further decline as fears of rising interest rates continue to grip financial markets, currency analysts said Friday.

It lost nearly a penny from European opening levels to stand at 1.5520 marks by 1200 GMT and was down around four pence from Thursday's European high.

The selloff in the U.S. currency was triggered by a surprise interest rate hike from both Italy and Sweden on

Thursday. The moves prompted speculation that the German interest rate easing process may have ground to a halt.

The resultant exodus from global bond markets on the back of interest rate jitters has only served to heighten the German currency's allure.

"There has been no bounce at all in the dollar. I would suggest that the market is still long (of dollars) and there's still room for it to go down," said John Cox, vice-president at Bank of New York in London.

"At the moment there is no evidence of people liquidating long dollar positions," added Mr. Cox.

Dealers said they will be looking closely at next week's U.S. Federal Open Market Committee meeting for their next clue to dollar direction.

"I think the Fed (Federal Reserve) will raise rates next week but that's in the market — I think the Bundesbank won't," said Neil Mackinnon, chief economist at U.S. bank Citibank in London.

"Technically the move through 1.5730 marks opens up the downside for the dol-

lar and I am looking for a move down to around the 1.52 area," he added.

The dollar's misery was compounded by the poor demand for the last leg of the U.S. quarterly refunding and a tough defeat for President Bill Clinton over a crime bill.

It had slipped to 99.87 yen earlier in the day compared with 100.58 late Thursday in Europe.

But the speed of the dollar's descent has triggered some talk in the market of a possible rescue mission by central banks to support the ailing U.S. currency. However,

analysts were sceptical of such talk, but did note that talk in late morning trade that the Bundesbank has been checking rates on dollar/mark helped the dollar off session lows.

"The Bundesbank could come in at any time," said one senior dealer at a U.S. bank in London. "You have to be careful about getting short down here, it's not a one-way bet."

The flight into marks saw the German currency romp ahead on the cross rates, crushing the lira in its wake. The Italian currency hit fresh

record lows throughout the morning session and had slumped to 1026.50 per mark from Thursday's 1006.20.

The Bank of Italy raised discount and Lombard rates by half a percentage point to 7.5 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively, while Sweden raised the lending rate by half a point to 8.0 per cent and the central repo rate to 7.2 per cent.

The Swedish crown, although eclipsed in the news stakes by the lira's slump, lost further ground to stand at 5.0200 per mark versus 4.9685.

NAM experts call for massive debt reduction

JAKARTA (AFP) — A group of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) experts called Friday for a 70 per cent reduction of the foreign debt owed by struggling low-income nations.

"Scaling down the debts of low and lower-middle income, heavily-indebted developing countries by 70 per cent on average, would seem to be an appropriate objective to be aimed at in international debt policy," said a report submitted by the group Friday to Indonesian President Suharto.

It said that the ability of indebted countries to resume economic growth through domestic saving, investment and new foreign capital inflow were already limited by their existing debts.

The problem is further aggravated by the competition from eastern European countries in drawing assistance and investment from wealthier nations and organisations, the summary said.

"Debt reduction needs to be sizeable to make a difference to the economic future of low-income and lower-middle-income debt-affected countries," it said.

The scaling-down should also be applied to all major types of credits — bilateral

official creditors, private sector lenders and multilateral creditors.

It added that private sector and multilateral lender debts were bigger than those owed to official bilateral creditors, which the report said were "not being serviced anyway at present."

Simply rescheduling debts would only aggravate the problem of poorer nations because of the mounting cost of the interest-on-interest effect, it said.

It said that 32 — or two thirds — of the 58 heavily-indebted countries in 1992, were classified as least-developed countries. Their total debt stood at \$248 billion.

Their arrears in scheduled debt servicing, which the report said were a key indicator of a country's debt burden, were much higher than the 20 per cent threshold, with 91 per cent of them having arrears exceeding 50 per cent.

Many of these countries, with per capita income of between \$60 to \$650, were already faced with negative growth rates, and the severe difficulties they had servicing their debts resulted in a persistent accumulation of arrears.

Political limbo put Nordic markets in firing line

STOCKHOLM (R) — Currency speculators pounced on the Swedish currency Friday, spooked by Thursday's shock interest rate rise, and Nordic neighbours also felt the heat.

Speculators bullied the crown down nearly 1.5 per cent past a psychological level of five crowns to the mark. By 1130 GMT it stood at 5.03, near its lowest level since its November 1992 float, after ending Thursday at 4.96.

Sweden's central bank (Riksbank) has painted itself into a corner. It has shown its

weakness by raising rates to defend the crown and the speculators will see how far they can push it to see what it does next," a currency-market chief trader said.

In Sweden and Finland especially, the combination of market doubts about government's ability to deal credibly with major economic problems amid political uncertainty, pushed already soggy currencies and weak state bonds further into the mire.

Bond and currency market analysts said the Swedes had

completely missed the point by trying to tackle a problem with its roots in state borrowing by using a short-term monetary instrument. Some feared the Finns might do the same.

"They are trying to be tough, but it looks more suicidal," said Lehman Brothers' analyst Keld Holm, drawing parallels with the autumn 1992 crisis when the Riksbank's attempt to defend the crown with 500 per cent interest rates failed miserably.

"The Swedish central bank

is not in touch with reality. It can't be a surprise for them to see this reaction — they've seen it before — so it shows their lack of skills," he added.

Virtually without exception, economists and analysts say the reason for the crown's weakness is a crisis of investor confidence in Swedish politicians' ability to take tough fiscal policy decisions and reduce enormous state debt.

A dramatic bond-market boycott in July by Swedish insurer Skandia, one of the

Nordic region's largest investors, was perhaps the clearest demonstration yet of this concern.

Yet when the Riksbank raised its rates, governor Urban Backstrom said the country's prevailing political uncertainty, stoked by a general election on Sept. 18 to be followed by a referendum on EU membership in November, had not been a factor.

Mr. Backstrom said the bank increased its central repo rate by 28 basis points to 7.20 per cent and its ceiling

leading rate by half a percentage point to 8.00 per cent to make a preemptive strike against signs of rising inflation.

Economists dismantled his carefully-constructed analysis of the external and internal elements in the Swedish inflation picture one by one and reached another conclusion.

"The Riksbank is seeing inflation ghosts that no one else can see," Nordbanken's chief economist Olle Djerf said. "The move is counter-productive and dangerous," he added.

Dollar expected to come under renewed pressure in coming quarters

This report, covering the period from Thursday, Aug. 4, 1994 until Wednesday Aug. 10, 1994, is provided by Naser Nabulsi, private client group at Merrill Lynch-Dubai

U.S. dollar

Fundamental view:

The dollar continues to trade well above its recent mid-July lows as market participants anticipate another Fed tightening around the time of the Aug. 16 FOMC meeting. We expect the dollar to come under renewed downward pressure in coming quarters, despite prospects for the Fed funds rate to reach five per cent or a bit higher early next year.

Against a backdrop of weak confidence in U.S. foreign policy and ongoing trade and capital account deficits, marginally higher U.S. interest rates are likely to offer scant attraction to foreign investors, especially Japanese, who have suffered massive currency losses on their dollar assets. We maintain 12-month targets of DM/USD 1.50 and JPY/USD 95.

Technical view:

The dollar's rebound from the record lows of July 12 could be developing as a sign of renewed dollar strength. However, until all indicators suggest so, the recent gain is being viewed as a counter trend move from a heavily oversold condition. Moreover, some of the newspaper headline focus on the fallout of the U.S. dollar has waned and at the same time the U.S. dollar index has gained four per cent over the past four weeks. It seems as though the decoupling between bonds and the dollar could be developing. This was evident last Friday when the U.S. dollar remained steady despite U.S. bonds selling off on the negative July U.S. employment figures.

Although the obstacle for the dollar's strength at present is by how much will the Fed increase interest rates, medium term momentum measures need to improve some more to suggest that a bottom is fully in place. For now, the U.S. dollar should strengthen some more against the Japanese yen, Deutschmark, and the Swiss franc over the near term while the British pound should regain some momentum and at the same time the Australian and Canadian dollar should also strengthen against the U.S. dollar.

Japanese yen

Fundamental view:

The dollar has bounced back to the JPY/USD 101 level after having plunged to the JPY/USD 96 level in mid-July. Many analysts appear to believe that the dollar has bottomed against the yen, pointing to prospects for more rate hikes in the U.S., signs of a diminishing trade surplus in Japan, and a new stance by U.S. economic officials to talk up the dollar. We think the administration and market participants alike will be surprised at how difficult it will be for the U.S. to stabilise the dollar for the following reasons:

- (1) Confidence in U.S. foreign policy leadership seems unlikely to improve substantially anytime soon;
- (2) Capital outflows from the U.S. are likely to persist, even with higher U.S. rates; and
- (3) The U.S. trade and the current account deficit is likely to remain around 2% of GDP, larger than the appetite of foreigners for U.S. assets.

The trend toward reduced outflows of private sector capital from Japan, associated with the collapse of the real estate bubble, is unlikely to end anytime soon, which should keep the yen stronger than other fundamentals might suggest. Dollar weakness is likely to require persistent Bank of Japan dollar-buying efforts in coming quarters in order to make up for the private sector's unwillingness to finance ongoing U.S. deficits. We maintain our forecast for the yen to reach JPY/USD 95 in 12-months time.

Technical view:

The Japanese yen has weakened since July 12, losing 3.8 per cent against the U.S. dollar. Short term momentum measures are still overbought to suggest that a correction back through 101.40 JY/USD and perhaps beyond to 106-112 is underway. Medium term momentum measures are also deteriorating to support the idea that a move towards 101.40; then 106-112 is possible over the next few weeks to months. Resistance exists at 97.20 and then below 93.00.

However, the present question is whether a top is in place for the yen. It would seem that a test near the recent highs is needed before a top is firmly in place. Sentiment has become oversold for the first time in seven weeks.

Pound sterling

Fundamental view:

The British pound held steady against the U.S. dollar in the face of dollar strength against the yen and the DM, continuing to trade during the week around U.S.\$/GBP 1.54. With the DM down against the dollar, the pound traded higher against the DM, at DM/GBP 2.44. The pound's strength was based on market expectations of a hike in U.K. base rates, expectations fuelled by statements by the governor of Bank of England.

We continue to expect a 50 basis point hike in U.K. base rates in the fourth quarter. This combined with the 50 basis point cut in the German discount rate expected after the October election should move the U.K.-German interest rate differential in favour of the pound.

The pound continues to bask in impressive numbers on the fundamentals in U.K., with GDP growth outpacing inflation, a rate occurrence in the last three decades. With the DM expected to strengthen against the U.S.\$, and the pound to strengthen against the DM, we expect the pound will appreciate to 1.50 U.S.\$ in six to twelve months time.

Technical view:

Over the past week, the British pound has gained slightly against the U.S. dollar. This is on the back of a two per cent loss it sustained following its recent July 12 high of 1.57 U.S.\$/GBP. Short term momentum is overbought and short term sentiment is also overbought to respect the possibility that the pound could challenge the recent highs.

Resistance does exist at 1.58 U.S.\$/GBP. A move to that level would most likely serve to create an important top. This would be supported by deteriorating medium term momentum oscillators. Support exists at 1.51 U.S.\$/GBP and the lower end of the trading range at 1.46 is second support.

Deutschmark

Technical view:

The Deutschmark has lost 4% (since July 12 through Aug. 5) against the U.S. dollar. Short term momentum is still overbought on the Deutschmark as a result, we should allow for weakness through 1.60 DM/USD and also allow for 1.616. Deutschmark support exists at 1.49-1.52, but an

eventual test of the 1992 highs at 1.39 cannot be ruled out. Similar to that of the yen, the present question is whether a top is in place for the Deutschmark. We would most likely need a test of or near the recent highs first. This would be supported by medium term momentum measures which are starting to work off an overbought condition. Additionally, sentiment measures have moved into oversold levels.

Swiss franc

Fundamental view:

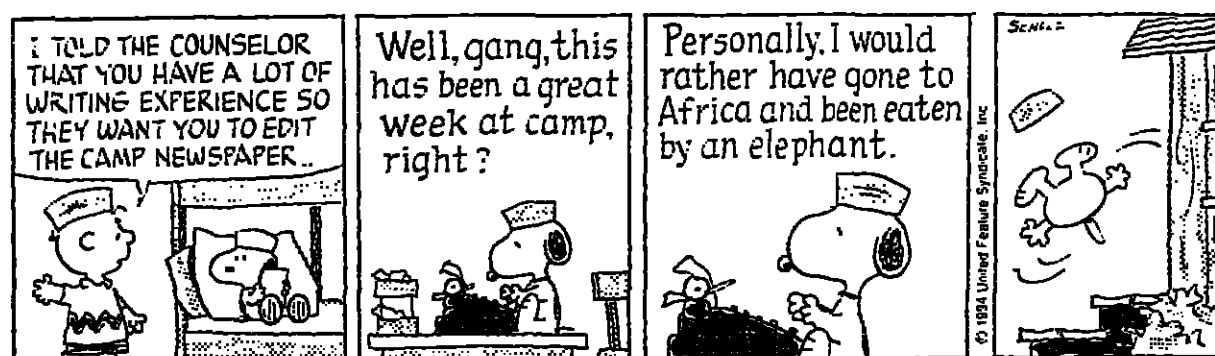
The Swiss franc held steady against the U.S.\$ and the DM, trading around SF/USD 1.33 and SF/DM 0.84. Despite the dollar's current strength against the Swiss franc, in the longer-run, our forecast calls for the franc to trade higher against the dollar, to SF/USD 1.26 in twelve months. This is based on our forecast for continued mark strength against the U.S.\$ and the franc holding steady against the mark. Swiss authorities are expected to match possible future German rate cut to avoid any upward pressure on the franc. That should help the franc hold the line against the mark.

Technical view:

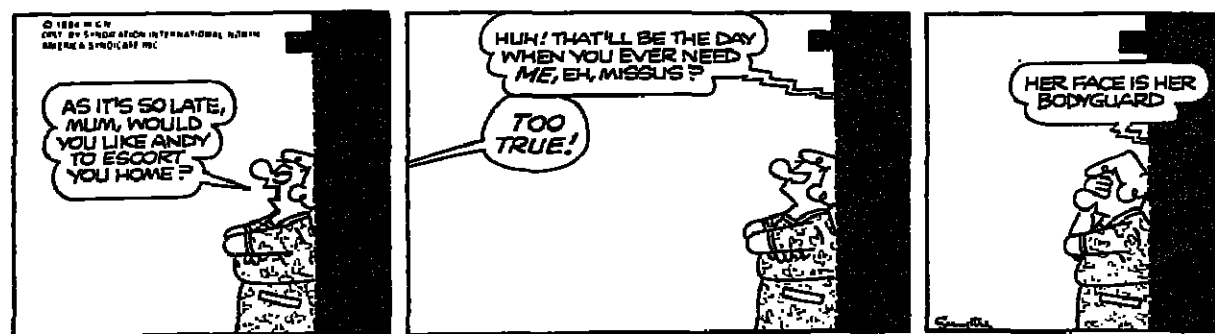
Along with the British pound, the Swiss franc gained versus the U.S. dollar over the past week gaining slightly less than one per cent (.80%). However, since its July 12th high of 1.29 SF/USD the Swiss franc has lost 3.7% through last Friday. With a current price range of 1.34-1.33, the Swiss franc is closer to strong support levels at 1.38-1.39 than resistance of 1.23-1.26.

Short term momentum is poor to suggest that the Swiss franc could encounter further weakness. This would also be supported by poor medium term momentum measures. However, short term sentiment has improved and is overbought which implies any correction that does develop should be relatively short lived.

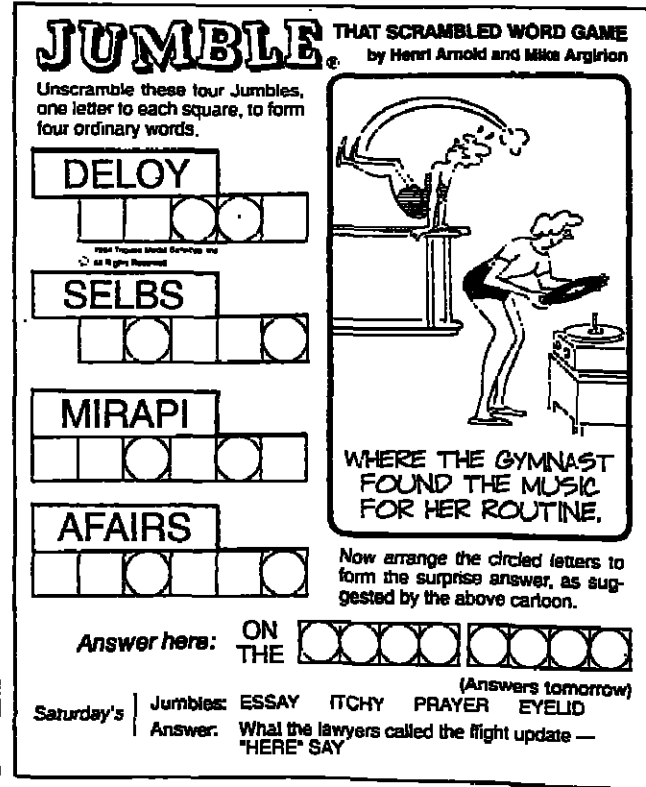
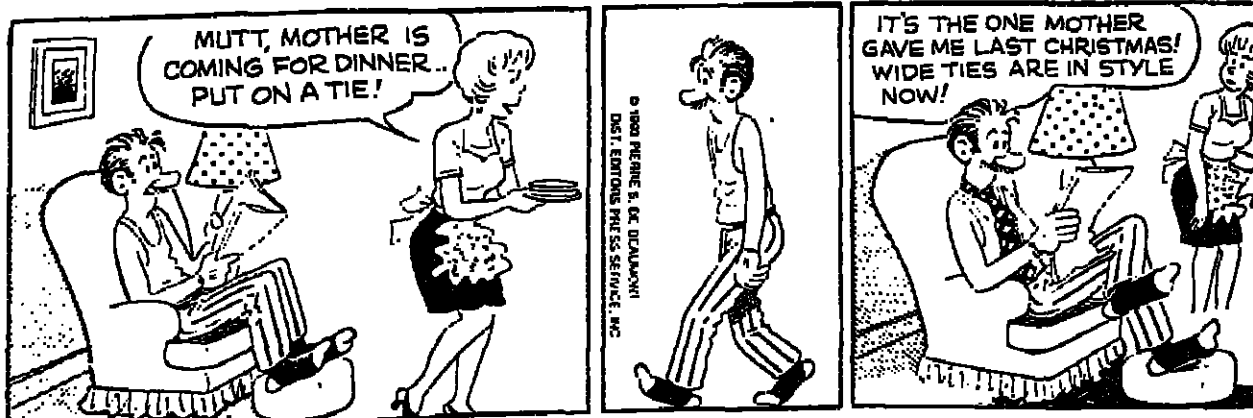
Peanuts



Andy Capp



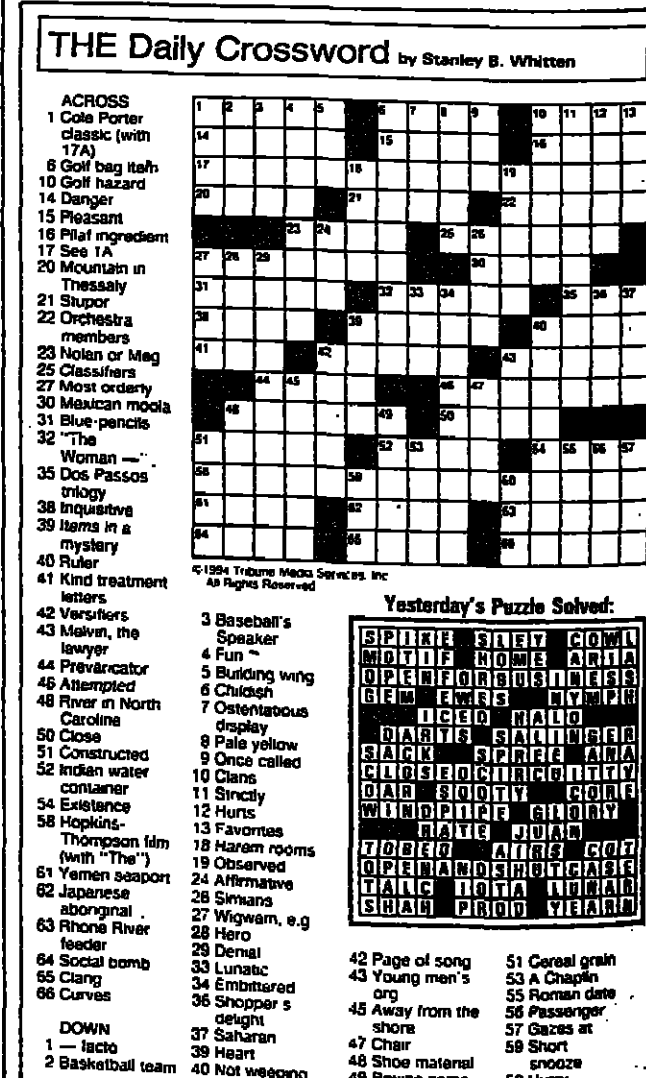
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Palladium enjoys the summer heat

LONDON (R) — Palladium, long outshone by other precious metals, is having a record summer as Japanese imports soar, helped by consumers buying machines such as yoghurt makers and portable air conditioners to cope with sweltering heat.

"Japan is where it's at the moment and that's being driven primarily by electrical and electronic output," said T. Hoare Co. metals analyst Rhona O'Connell.

Palladium is used in everything from electrical and electronic goods, such as the current Japanese fads, to tooth fillings and converters to help cut car pollution.

Its price has risen to the highest in five years, finally bringing it to the attention of investors who in the past have ignored it in favour of gold, silver and platinum.

"Palladium is certainly the flavour of the month," Mr. O'Connell said.

According to analysts at CRU International, Japanese imports of palladium were 28 per cent higher in the first five months of the year. In all of 1993 the country bought a record 70.46 tonnes.

Mr. O'Connell said the mobile phone industry in particular is soaking up increasing Japanese imports of palladium.

Though the amount going into hot-weather gadgets in Japan has not yet been quantified, she said the run in Tokyo shops adds to the positive sentiment in the worldwide market.

"That's a booming area and obviously it would help (to sustain prices) to a certain extent," she said.

At Friday's London fixing, palladium was set at \$152.25 an ounce, compared with around \$125 at the start of the year.

Despite the fact that past rallies have been short-lived, market analysts expect prices to stay high this time.

Last year, the global supply of palladium was 4.26 million ounces, 125,000 ounces less than demand, according to the London-based Johnson Matthey, the world's leading refiner.

"There really is demand out there," said CRU International analyst Tony Warwick-Ching, "and the Russians weren't doing what they did last year, which is selling into the rallies, so the price continues to climb up."

Even with increased supplies expected from Russia and South Africa, analysts were unconcerned.

"This is a decent equilibrium level, given that at the moment the market is very tight," Ms. O'Connell said.

"The dynamics of the market suggest that it can easily absorb any extra supply at the moment," she said, noting that the European vehicle market was picking up and the Japanese market also looked poised for a turnaround.

In the longer term, strict

environmental legislation in California will increase the amount of palladium needed for auto catalysts for engines using lead-free fuel.

California requires vehicle emission levels to be halved by 1998. The rest of the United States tends to follow California's cue and Europe is expected to join in about five years later.

"I see growth in the use of all three metals (used in auto catalysts to clean up car exhausts) — platinum, rhodium and palladium," Michael Steel, the market research director of Johnson Matthey, told Reuters in a recent interview in Japan.

"But growth in palladium seems greatest since it is starting from a lower base and you have to use more weight per car," he said.

Though most analysts forecast that the palladium price would reach \$160 in the near future, they did not think it would climb higher without manufacturers looking for a substitute, which could in turn send the price back down.

"If the market really got its knickers off, I suppose it could have a challenge at the historic high of \$180, but I don't think it would stay there for long," Ms. O'Connell said.

Prisons swelling with debt defaulters

UAE interior ministry urges banks to curb loans

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) interior ministry has issued a rare appeal for local banks and financial firms to curb loans, saying its prisons were swelling with debt defaulters.

"The minister has noticed that a large number of people have been imprisoned in debt cases because of their involvement in debts that surpass their financial ability," the ministry said in a statement published Friday in local newspapers.

It added the problem was also due to "the fact that banks and other financial and commercial companies are offering large facilities to those people without making sure of their ability to repay on time."

"The ministry appeals for all those banks and institutions to take the necessary measures to make sure of the ability of their clients to repay their debt. It also appeals for individuals not to get involved in transactions that exceed their financial capabilities," the statement said.

The statement did not elaborate on the defaulters but there has been a surge in personal loans extended by

banks and other financial companies to offset a relative decline in credits to companies in recent years.

UAE banks have just recovered from the problem of bad debts that inflicted heavy losses on many of them in the mid-1980s and forced some institutions to merge to avert collapse.

The problem was caused by a rush in providing loans during the oil boom of late 1970s and early 1980s. Many debtors were unable to keep up repayments after business sharply receded due to a drop in oil prices and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The central bank, seeking to prevent a repetition of the problem, issued instructions to the 47 banks last year setting a ceiling of credits to companies and individuals.

Meanwhile, low interest rates have forced UAE national banks to slash their deposits with banks abroad

and switch to stocks and other investments.

The central bank said that deposits by the 19 local banks, invested mostly in Japan, Switzerland, France, the United States and other industrial countries, plunged to 32.5 billion dirhams (\$8.85 billion) in March from 41.9 billion dirhams (\$11.4 billion) at the end of 1992.

The bank said in a study that their investments in stocks and bonds surged to 6.45 billion dirhams (\$1.75 billion) from 4.2 billion dirhams (\$1.14 billion).

The decline in bank deposits pushed down their total foreign assets to 49.1 billion dirhams (\$13.37 billion) from 55.9 billion dirhams (\$15.23 billion) in the same period, the study said.

Total assets, including foreign and internal assets, remained almost unchanged at around 116 billion dirhams (\$31.6 billion).

"It is normal that the banks shift to other investment instruments to ensure higher profits," a UAE bank manager told AFP. "Apart from stocks, investments were also concentrated in local credits."

Central bank figures showed credits and loans provided by the national banks to the local market soared to 55.7 billion dirhams (\$15.17 billion) by March from 48.6 billion dirhams (\$13.24 billion) by the end of 1992.

Given the absence of other major business opportunities in the region, their domestic investments rose to only 1.22 billion dirhams (\$332 million) from 1.11 billion dirhams (\$302 million).

Credits to the external market, included in the foreign assets also remained almost unchanged at nearly 8.6 billion dirhams (\$2.43 billion) while investments in other foreign sectors in-

creased to around 1.23 billion dirhams (\$335 million) from 1.18 billion dirhams (\$321 million).

The switch from overseas bank deposits and the surge in domestic credits, caused by an economic upswing in the Gulf, enabled local banks to make record profits of \$403 million in 1993.

"Another record performance is expected this year as there is big demand for credits," a UAE banker said.

"What also helps us is the widening gap between interest rates on deposits and loans."

The central bank said last week it had also slashed its own deposits with foreign banks to invest in government bonds and bills. It said this had boosted its net profit by 35.7 per cent to around \$218 million in 1993 from \$160.6 million in 1992.

The central bank report showed local banks were not

affected by the decline in interest rates locally and the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which was controlled by the UAE emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Deposits with the 19 banks fell slightly to 68.1 billion dirhams (\$16.8 billion) in March from 62.3 billion dirhams (\$16.97 billion) in March 1992, according to the report.

Unlike national banks, external assets of the 28 foreign banks based in the UAE increased to 14.4 billion dirhams (\$3.9 billion) from 12.5 billion dirhams (\$3.4 billion). The increase was mainly due to a rise in bank deposits to \$2.61 billion from \$2.2 billion.

The report showed a large increase in credits by the foreign banks over the past two years but they virtually had no investments in the local market.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3828/38	Canadian dollar
	1.5510/20	Deutsche marks
	1.7428/38	Dutch guilders
	1.3015/25	Swiss francs
	32.04/08	Belgian francs
	5.3290/40	French francs
	1587.3/8.8	Italian lire
	99.68/78	Japanese yen
	7.7887/87	Swedish crowns
	6.8320/70	Norwegian crowns
	6.168/74	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.5460/70	
One ounce of gold	\$377.70/378.20	

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Exxon ordered to pay fishermen \$286.8m

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AFP) — A federal jury Thursday ordered the Exxon Corporation to pay \$286.8 million in damages to commercial fishermen for losses from the catastrophic 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The verdict capped 23 days of deliberations on claims by more than 10,000 fishermen who had sought \$895 million from the top U.S. oil producer to compensate for damage to fishing grounds and fish prices.

The jury ruled in June that Exxon and the skipper of the Exxon Valdez tanker recklessly caused the worst oil spill in U.S. history, which dumped nearly 41.6 million liters (11 million gallons) of crude into prime fishing waters.

The damages ruling Thursday closed the second phase of the trial, covering claims for compensation for actual economic losses after five years of cleanup, scientific research and legal haggling.

The jury still has to decide how much Exxon and the captain should pay in punitive damages, designed to punish and deter future acts. Fishermen, native Alaskans, cannery workers and landowners are seeking \$15 billion.



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WORLD BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cuban star defects in Canada

TORONTO (AFP) — Star Cuban basketball centre Richard Matienzo defected here Thursday, saying he was tired of living in poverty to benefit the government.

Matienzo, here for the World Basketball Championships, requested political refugee status in Canada after leaving the Cuban delegation.

"I just decided there was pure abuse and pure exploitation for the goal of nothing. It was pure propaganda," Matienzo told the Toronto Star, which began looking after him once told of his situation.

The most valuable player and top scorer in Cuba's basketball league last season departed only with what he wore, shorts and a T-shirt plus basketball shoes. The paper paid for new apparel Thursday.

"I have more pride in being myself than I was ever granted by the government," Matienzo said. "For the first time in my life, I feel like a person and I deserve to live

for something other than the government."

Matienzo escaped late Wednesday with the help of Alfredo Jordan, a Toronto shop owner who came to Canada from Cuba 12 years ago. The departure fulfilled his other's request he depart their Havana shack, which he said had no bathroom or kitchen. Matienzo said he fears for the two sons, five siblings, mother and girlfriend he leaves behind.

"I'm worried the backlash will be tremendous, but I feel confident because this is what my family wanted," he said. "My family will take the burden that has to be taken. I had to walk away. My defection is going to create a lot of chaos. I believe the cheers of fans will be behind me all the way."

Matienzo follows his father Julio, who defected to the United States in 1980, and ex-Cuban centre Andres Guibert, who defected in Puerto Rico last year at a qualifying event for the world

finals. A total of 42 Cubans defected there.

Matienzo, 25, said he dreams of playing in the National Basketball Association (NBA) like Guibert, who played five games for lowly Minnesota late last season.

Matienzo played 164 minutes in Cuba's first five games here this week. Without him, Cuba lost 86-74 Thursday to Germany in a consolation round match, ensuring a bottom-four finish in the 16-team event.

"Our team, just like with a revolution, approached the game with conviction and strength and we went to play the game regardless of what happened," Cuba coach Miguel Calderon Gomez said.

Matienzo was last seen by Gomez while watching videotapes of Germany's game with Brazil.

"We have no information regarding him," Gomez said. "He left the hotel with some friends and has not come

back."

Brian Cooper, vice president of the tournament, said he was satisfied Matienzo departed without enticement and was safe.

"Contract was instigated by the player himself," Cooper said. "I felt very comfortable that he did this of his own free will. Without a doubt. Through our security forces we had a special immigration official on call 24 hours for such a situation."

"We certainly were not persuading or dissuading anyone. But we were prepared," Cooper said.

Matienzo's 94 points in five games were a team-high. His 25 rebounds were third-best on the club, and his 24-for-28 free-throw showing paces Cuba.

Matienzo, who stands 202 cm and weighs 96 kg, has been a member of the Cuban national team since 1990. He played against the original Dream Team in their first game at the 1992 Olympic qualifying tournament.

Cold war's end has not cooled ardour of U.S.-Russia match

TORONTO (AP) — The passage of time, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war have cooled most of the passion that might otherwise accompany a U.S.-Russia basketball game.

Not all of it. Reggie Miller, who probably doesn't know much about the first time the Americans lost to the Soviets in 1972, is thinking about a payoff for something more recent, last month's Goodwill Games.

"We're really looking forward to playing Russia," said Miller, whose 3-point shooting has started U.S. rallies in the last two games. "That's one game that was marked on our schedules before this began."

"We saw how they pushed around our young boys over there in Russia. We're sending in their big brothers. Let's see if they do all that pushing now."

The senior citizen of Dream Team II, Dominique Wilkins, was just 11 years old at the time of the controversial 1972 Olympics game in which the Soviet Union won in the final second. That defeat was so painful the U.S. players even today refuse to accept their silver medal.

Another loss to the Soviets in the 1988 Olympics was not so infamous; there was no doubt it was fair and square. But that defeat, as much as

any of the others by U.S. college players, led to the acceptance of NBA stars in international competitions like the world championship of basketball.

Dream Team II was to play Russia late Friday night in a game that's essentially meaningless, because both teams already have clinched berths in Saturday's semifinals. But a loss is unthinkable to the Americans, who are expected not just to win a gold medal, but to dominate.

"We don't hold any grudges," coach Don Nelson said after practice Thursday. "The '72 loss was hard to swallow, but in '88, we lost to a great Soviet team that just overmatched our best college players."

The U.S. team has won three of five games by more than 50 points, including the last two against Australia and Puerto Rico, which was considered a medal contender after winning the Goodwill Games. Russia and Croatia both are undefeated after five games, and Greece, the fourth semifinalist, is 4-1.

"History doesn't matter at this point," Nelson said. "We realise that Russia is a good team and capable of winning the gold medal. We regard them and Croatia as the best teams. We respect the Russian team. They are playing some of the best ball they have played in a long time. We are

taking that game very seriously."

In the quarterfinal round, while Dream Team II beat Australia by 56 and Puerto Rico by 51, Russia beat those same teams by 27 and 15 points.

"Russia is close to being as good as anybody in this tournament, with the exception of us, but we have to go out and prove it again," Nelson said. "We don't want to get a false sense of security now that we're playing higher-caliber teams."

Nelson's biggest problem so far has been keeping 12 NBA all-stars happy with their playing time. Dream Team I coach Chuck Daly, asked what advice he gave Nelson, said to him, "get a stopwatch."

"You can really only play 10 guys in a game, so there are going to be two unhappy people every game," Nelson said. "As a former player, I would rather not play at all than three or four minutes, and I considered doing that. But the coaching staff decided not to do that, so everybody usually has played at least a little bit."

But Wednesday night against Puerto Rico, captain Joe Dumars, who went into the game ranked third on the team in minutes with 21.3, did not play at all. He is the only player who hasn't appeared in every game.

Egyptian player tests positive for steroids

TORONTO (AFP) — Egyptian forward Ashraf Mohammad tested positive for steroids here at the World Basketball Championships, officials said Thursday.

Ashraf was suspended for the remainder of the tournament for the violation. His steroid-laden urine sample was taken last Thursday, the opening day of the tournament, following a 102-74 loss to Puerto Rico.

Mohammad faces a two-year suspension for his first infraction: with a second bringing a lifetime ban. The Egyptian delegation has the right to ask for a second test from another sample.

The performance enhancers were of little aid to the Egyptian team, which has lost all six games played so far. That included an 89-81 defeat Thursday at the hands of South Korea. Mohammad did not play.

Mohammad averaged six points a game and 20 minutes of playing time through five contests.



Al Faisali's captain Jamal Abu Abed raises the Cup Winners Cup after receiving it from His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah. Below, Al Faisali's goalkeeper Raed Ahmad catches the ball as players from both teams look on.



Seville opens bidding for '99 world championships

HELSENKI (R) — Seville, where temperatures regularly reach 40 Celsius in the summer, has bid to stage the world athletics championships in 1999, Primo Nebiolo, President of the sport's governing body, said Friday.

Nebiolo, head of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), said at a news conference that the Spanish city, which hosted the 1991 world indoor championships, was the only definite bidder to date.

"There have been plenty of rumours about other cities bidding for the 1999 championships, including London, Athens, but Seville is the only one so far," he said.

Referring to a possible bid

from the French capital, Nebiolo said: "This is our dream because Paris is always Paris, no?"

But he conceded Paris might delay a bid until early in the next century because the soccer World Cup will be staged in France in 1998.

The decision on the 1999 event will be taken at next year's world championships in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The 1997 championships are set for Mexico City. Nebiolo also said the IAAF was considering expanding its grand prix series which has been sponsored by Mobil since 1985.

"We are studying the possibilities of including cities like New Delhi, Tokyo and Sydney on the calendar," he said.

Perec completes full circle at European Championships

HELSENKI, Finland (AP) — France's Marie-Jose Perec completed the circle with a lap around the track.

In 1990 as a beginner in the 400 metres, she scored her first success with a third in the European Championships. The following year she became World champion and the year after that she was the Olympic gold medalist.

Now she returned to the European meet and added the missing gold medal to her collection Thursday with an easy victory in 50.33 seconds. "It was the first gold medal for France here but they need more of them," Perec said.

It was a comeback of sorts for Perec. She fell out of favour with the French track authorities and moved to the United States to train in Los Angeles under famed coach John Smith. Then, in returning to France, she had a toe injury moving furniture and missed a couple meets, including the French championships.

Perec said she was motivated to do well after her teammate, Stephane Diagana, lost in the 400 hurdles. "Yesterday I felt sorry for Diagana," Perec said. "I hope this will boost France to more success."

With three victories in the three major championships, Perec said she may change events. "Maybe I will move to the 400-metre hurdles," Perec said. "I think I can really do something good there."

In other events, Irina Privalova of Russia became the first double winner as she captured the women's 200 title to go along with her 100 victory and Norway's Geir Moen took the men's 200 in 20.30. Britain's Linford Christie, the 100 champion, did not run the event.

Rodion Gataulin of Russia defended his pole vault crown with a top clearance of 6.00 metres in the place of the another top competitor, Sergei Bubka.

Congress looks at U.S. Olympic Committee handling of skater Tonya Harding case

WASHINGTON (AP) — It took 4 hours, 25 minutes, but a Senate committee finally asked the biggest Olympic question Thursday.

Why didn't you get rid of figure skater Tonya Harding after she was implicated in the attack on rival Nancy Kerrigan?

"It was a blot on our history of participation in the Olympics," Sen. Ted Stevens told Harvey Schiller, the executive director of the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC). "But I guess it was unavoidable."

Coming late on a salty day on Capitol Hill, Stevens' statement was perhaps the most cutting comment in an afternoon of hearings on possible revisions of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, the federal law that governs Olympic sports in the United States.

The Senate commerce committee heard from a dozen witnesses that the 16-year-old law is basically OK. But witnesses also said that Olympic community in the United States still contains too few women and minority

group members, does not police itself well and has done nothing to improve the deteriorating physical condition of the nation's children while churning out a few high-priced superstars.

The law, which Stevens wrote, helped clear up the mess of competing jurisdictions in U.S. amateur sports and gave the USOC sweeping powers to put together teams for the Olympics and other international sports events.

When the law was enacted, however, there had never been anything close to the soap opera of Tonya and Nancy.

Harding, of course, was allowed to compete in the winter games in Lillehammer, Norway, last February, despite USOC efforts to kick her off the Olympic team amid growing evidence of her involvement in the attack on figure skating rival Nancy Kerrigan.

Schiller said the USOC did all it could — or felt comfortably able to do — under its own bylaws and the law the committee was discussing. Since the attack occurred



Tonya Harding

during the national figure skating championships, Schiller said, the USOC did not have direct control over Harding, even though those championships picked the Olympic figure skating team.

A blue-ribbon panel is reviewing the situation and is expected to recommend a code of conduct for all potential U.S. Olympians, Schiller said. Stevens applauded that

effort. "I support the concept of an Olympic code of conduct, an Olympic creed, something a person swears to," the Alaska Republican said. "It would deal with fair play and sportsmanship, and should provide instant censure as soon as the athlete doesn't live up to the code. The athlete would be expelled from the process."



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Cantona gets three-match ban

LONDON (AFP) — Eric Cantona has received a three-match suspension for his sending off in Manchester United's friendly match at Glasgow Rangers last week.

However, the French captain will be available for United's Charity Shield match against Blackburn Rovers, the traditional curtain-raiser to the season, at Wembley Sunday.

The striker, already fined around £20,000 by his club, was dismissed by Scottish referee Andrew Waddell for a two-footed lunge at Rangers defender Steven Pressley.

Controversial Cantona had been booked for dissent only minutes before and there was doubt over whether he had been dismissed for the foul itself, or for a second bookable offence, which would have carried a shorter ban.

The bad news was confirmed when the Football Association contacted United

Friday, which means the striker will miss the opening match at home to Queens Park Rangers next Saturday and the games at Nottingham Forest and Tottenham the following week.

Cantona is further banned for United's first four games in the European Cup, having been seen off at the end of the ill-fated match against Galatasaray in Turkey last season.

United's England midfielder Paul Ince has recovered from a knee injury in time to take his place at Wembley.

Manager Alex Ferguson, who has allowed Republic of Ireland international Denis Irwin and Roy Keane time off to recover from the World Cup, will give £1.2 million defender David May his competitive debut against his former club.

May will replace injured England right back Paul Parker, with winger Lee Sharpe

switching to left-back.

Blackburn are without Alan Shearer, Mike Newell and Kevin Gallacher up front, while England midfielder David Batty is a long-term absentee with a foot injury.

Manager Kenny Dalglish has not counted out five-million-pound man Chris Sutton, although the British record signing is struggling with a viral complaint.

Meanwhile, prospective striking partner Alan Shearer has denied rumours that he is suffering from the liver disease hepatitis A and could be out for months.

The England forward insisted he was the victim of an infection from eating undercooked seafood on holiday in Portugal, and said he could return to the game within days.

Shearer said: "I'm young and fit and already feel 100 per cent."

Italy appeals decision to scrub Monza race

ROME (R) — The Italian government Friday urged the International Motoring Federation (FIA) to reverse its decision to cancel the 1994 Italian Grand Prix on safety grounds.

Cabinet under-secretary Gianni Letta wrote to FIA President Max Mosley on behalf of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, appealing to the FIA to find a solution to ensure the race was run as scheduled Sept. 11.

FIA announced earlier Friday that the 65-year-old race had been removed from the calendar because of doubts over whether the Italian authorities would authorise the agreed safety work.

Plans to modify the track involve the felling of around 100 trees in a Royal Park and have sparked protests by environmentalists. An Italian government official this week refused to allow permission for work to begin.

Letta said the race could still be saved by building in "one or more chicanes" to reduce speed as had been done at other circuits.

Safety has become a priority in Formula One after Ayrton Senna of Brazil and Austrian Roland Ratzenberger died earlier this year during the San Marino Grand Prix in the Italian town of Imola.

In Italy, race organisers lambasted Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who already faces a crisis as investors have taken fright at squabbling within his fractious coalition, for failing to ensure the Italian Grand Prix took place.

"This (decision) shows that the government has acted with complete irresponsibility," said Paolo Arrigoni, president of the Lombardy regional council.

In a meeting late Thursday, Arrigoni met cabinet under-secretary Gianni Letta, who promised the race would take place and presented a plan to make the track safer without cutting down trees.

"I don't know if the FIA have heard the appeal made by the government last night," Arrigoni said. "If not, then perhaps there is still time to change their minds."

"In any case, Berlusconi's reputation is riding on his ability to defend the grand prix," he said.

Monza mayor Aldo Molinari was equally harsh with the prime minister.

Germany's Schumacher takes pole position at Hungarian Grand Prix

BUDAPEST (R) — World championship leader Michael Schumacher Friday shrugged aside the controversy and problems surrounding himself and the Benetton team to claim provisional pole position for Sunday's Hungarian Grand Prix.

The 25-year-old German, showing all his familiar skill and commitment, clocked a best time of one minute 19.479 seconds on the twisting and dusty Hungarian circuit north of Budapest and gained the edge on rival Damon Hill.

Hill, the most serious threat to Schumacher's hope of hanging on to his runaway leadership of the drivers' title race, was second-fastest ahead of his Williams team mate, fellow Briton David Coulthard.

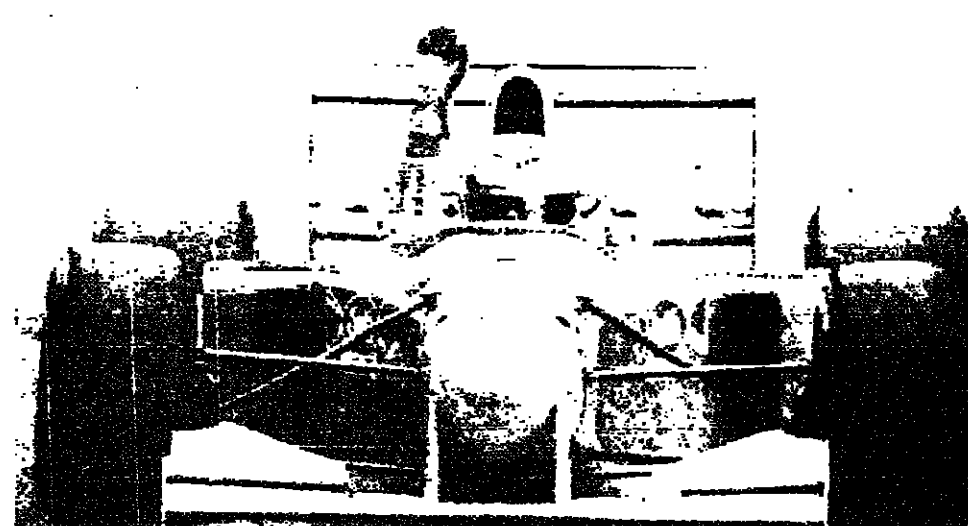
Coulthard shared the second row of the overnight grid with another Briton, Martin Brundle, who showed much-improved form in his Peugeot-powered McLaren.

Schumacher's display of authority will have done the Benetton team a power of good on a day when they issued yet another statement in their running argument with the ruling body, the International Motoring Federation (FIA).

Benetton were charged Wednesday with tampering with their refuelling rigs and removing a filter before the German Grand Prix last month when Dutchman Jos Verstappen's car was engulfed in flames following a fire during a refuelling stop in the race.

But on Friday the team reiterated their contention that they had permission to remove the filter.

"The fuel filter removed from our refuelling system was done with the full knowledge and approval of the FIA technical delegate Charlie Whiting," Benetton said.



Michael Schumacher

in the latest statement.

The FIA deny this and the French company which manufactured the system said Thursday that they would never have given such permission, on safety grounds.

Safety was also uppermost in the thoughts of FIA Friday when it announced the cancellation of the Italian Grand Prix following a long-running row over the safety of the Monza Circuit (see separate story).

On the Hungarian, Verstappen, now recovered from the slight facial wounds he suffered in the blaze, claimed the sixth-fastest time in the opening session, just behind Austrian Gerhard Berger who was fifth-quickest for Ferrari.

For Schumacher it was vital to take overnight pole position not only to boost morale in the troubled Benetton team garages but also to ensure he has an excellent chance of winning Sunday's 77-lap race.

The Hungarian is a notoriously difficult circuit for overtaking as it is narrow, twisty and slow and has many

times in the past made life very difficult for faster cars attempting to find a way past a slow leader.

Alesi, who was quickest early in the session, Hill, who was also on top of the times twice during the hour, and Schumacher were well aware of the prize at stake.

It made for an intriguing session, run on a track dry after heavy overnight rain, in which Schumacher was able to cope with every challenge raised to his times.

Both Hill and Coulthard, who impressed on his first visit to the demanding circuit, spun off towards the end of the session as did Frenchman Philippe Alliot, who was driving for McLaren for the first time as replacement for the suspended Finn Mika Hakkinen.

Hill said: "I went off because I was trying to do a really hard and fast coming-in lap. I was on the radio too at the time so I may not have been concentrating properly."

"I would like to have been on pole but I am not too disappointed — at least I am on the front row."

Schumacher was delighted with his performance.

"First of all, I must say it's very nice to be back in front after all the problems the team has had recently. This is the best answer we can give to everyone."

"I'm very happy with my time because it was quite a struggle. For some reason the track was very slippery during my first run compared to this morning and I nearly lost the car."

"We made some changes and improved the car quite a lot for the second run. That's when I did my best time. I'm looking forward to tomorrow because we could not make as many changes as we would have liked today and we can improve the car further."

"To take provisional pole like this and under these circumstances is a big compliment to the team."

Coulthard said: "It is the first time I have driven here and it is a difficult circuit, very demanding both mentally and physically, so I am very happy to be third. If I can keep this place it will be my best grid position."

Navratilova upset in L.A. Virginia Slims

MANHATTAN BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Ann Grossman survived two match points and 46 degree Celsius (115 Fahrenheit) heat to beat no. 2 Martina Navratilova 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 Thursday in the third round of the Virginia Slims of Los Angeles.

Top-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain routed Elena Likhovtseva of Kazakhstan 6-0, 6-0 in 49 minutes to advance to the quarterfinals.

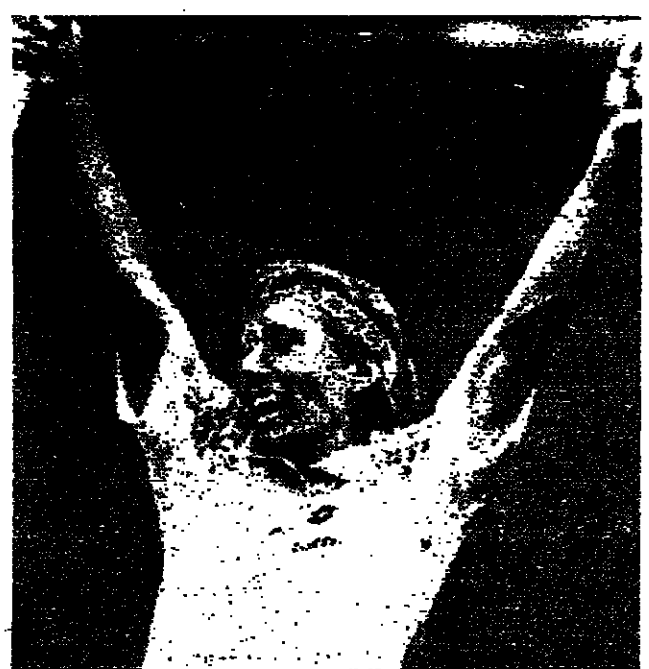
Grossman's friends encouraged her with shouts of "no fear" after she lost the first set and faced two match points in the second set on the hardcourts at Manhattan Country Club.

"Sometimes when I play top players I get scared, but I knew if I kept the ball deep I had a chance," said Grossman, a six-year pro whose highest world ranking was no. 29 last summer. "She is a legend and I told her after the match that she gave me a gift today by making my dream come true."

Navratilova led 5-4 and had double match point on Grossman's serve when controversy developed. Navratilova's backhand service return was called long and umpire Donna Ring did not overrule, giving Grossman the advantage. Then Navratilova's forehand volley sailed long and Grossman tied the set 5-5.

"I never had a worse no-overrule in my life," said Navratilova, who argued briefly with Ring. "I didn't even have enough energy to get mad."

Navratilova said she only had about three hours sleep



Martina Navratilova

after playing a doubles match that ended at 11 p.m. Wednesday.

"I think it finally caught up with me. I just couldn't go," she said. "It's always hard to lose, especially the way I did."

Navratilova, 37, was making her final singles appearance in Manhattan Beach, where she won eight titles, including the last two years.

Grossman advanced to the quarterfinals against no. 5 Zina Garrison-Jackson, a 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 winner over no. 9 Nathalie Tauziat of France.

Likhovtseva beat Gigi Fernandez and no. 16 Pam Shriver in the first two rounds, but had no luck against Martinez.

She failed to capitalise on two break points against Martinez in the third game of the first set, and never mounted a challenge.

"I can't remember the last time I won love and love," Martinez said. "It was more me not making any mistakes."

Other winners Thursday were: No. 4 Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic over 13th-seeded Patty Fendick 6-3, 7-5, no. 7 Julie Halard of France over Angelica Gavaldon 6-4, 6-3; no. 8 Sabine Appelmans of Belgium over Sandrine Testud of France 5-7, 6-1, 7-5 and Patricia Hy of Canada over no. 15 Kimberly Po, 7-5, 6-0.

Judge restores WBA title

PATERSON, N.J. (AP) — A middleweight regained his World Boxing Association (WBA) title Thursday, with a federal judge throwing the decisive punch.

The judge restored the title to John David Jackson, who had claimed the sanctions body used paper to do what 31 boxers couldn't do in the ring.

U.S. district judge Maryanne Trump Barry granted Jackson a preliminary injunction, barring the WBA from recognising anyone else as its middleweight champion.

She said a September trial would determine the case on

the merits, but granted the injunction because there was a likely chance of success and Jackson would suffer irreparable harm without it.

The WBA stripped Jackson of his championship after he fought May 6 in Atlantic City. It told Jackson and his promoter, Robert Goodman of Garden State Boxing, they needed permission for the non-title 10-round fight, said Jackson's lawyer, Patrick C. English.

"We found out that other champions did exactly what John David Jackson did and weren't stripped," English said.

A message left Thursday for WBA lawyer James J. Binns of Philadelphia was not returned.

Jackson, 31, of Los Angeles, is 31-0 with 8 knockouts. He has not defended his title since defeating Reggie "Sweet" Johnson Oct. 1 because of an injury and a lung infection, English said.

Jackson took the May 6 fight to get back in shape, English said, winning by a technical knockout in the eighth round over Jeff Johnson of Atlanta.

English contends WBA

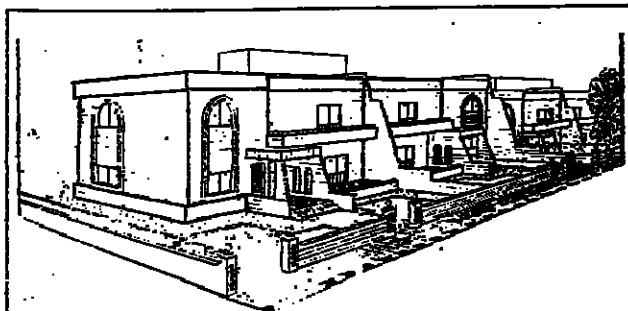
championship committee chairman Elias M. Cordova Jr. took Jackson's title in an effort to arrange a fight Friday in Argentina between the two top-ranked WBA contenders.

Reggie Johnson, ranked first, is promoted by Don King, while the second-ranked middleweight, Jorge Castro, is handled by Luis Spada's Panprom S.A.

Cordova and Spada are friends who have done business before, English said. The WBA is based in Venezuela.

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	Richard Gere/Sharon Stone in INTERSECTION Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Sharhan-Mahmoud Hamideh — Hussein Fahmi in Women's market Arabic Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.		CONCORD '1' PHILADELPHIA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' ROBINHOOD Shows: 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		The Cutting Edge Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00 Starting Aug. 24 the political play "SAHRA KANAUNIEH"		Today & Everyday Abu, Awad in social comedy "PUNCTURED ZAG"		Present their play WAT A PEACE! (Salam Ya Salam) Daily at 8:30 p.m. The theatre is closed on Tue Days	

France sees low risk of attacks on its soil

Algerian group presents 6 demands, warns Paris against ignoring them

PARIS (Agencies) — France, faced with new threats by militants, on Friday stepped up a police crackdown on suspected Islamic activity though the government said there was little risk of domestic extremist attacks.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said that the risk of attacks was greater outside the country and a militant Algerian Islamist group threatened reprisals against French interests in Algeria unless Paris met six conditions.

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which claimed responsibility for killing five French nationals earlier this month in Algiers, said in a statement published on Friday that France would face "violent attacks on its interests in Algeria" if it failed to meet the conditions.

These included evacuating all French citizens from Algeria and ending its support for Algeria's military-backed government.

The group also ordered France to protect Muslim rights on its national territory, divulge the names of its officials "collaborating" with the Algerian authorities, cooperate with the CIA and compensate Muslims for losses suffered through French support for Algiers.

Mr. Pasqua, France's hard-line internal security chief, told the French daily Le Figaro: "We do not believe there is a direct terrorist risk in France linked to the events in Algeria, but it is quite clear that we have to take precautions."

About 3,400 people were stopped overnight by police in Paris in the sixth day of a police crackdown after last week's slaying of five French officials in Algiers, for which the GIA claimed responsibility.

Police officials said their spot checks, which have affected more than 16,000 people so far in France, were taking place in a wider circle of cities.

While initially confined to the French capital, they were now under way on the high-

way leading to France's biggest international airport — Charles de Gaulle airport outside Paris, in Lyon, Bordeaux and Marseille in southern France, and in Lille in northern France, the officials said.

Eleven individuals were being questioned as a result of the latest police checks in Paris and two were taken in for questioning in Marseilles, the officials said.

Twenty-two interned Algerians remained in custody at a military barracks in Folembert in northeastern France.

The roundup, ordered by Mr. Pasqua, has provoked sharp criticism from civil rights groups and opposition political leaders for targeting North Africans and having little or no connection to the violence in Algeria.

The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), another Algerian group that is the military wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), last week threatened reprisals unless the 22 interned Muslims were freed.

FIS activities in France are the apparent target of Mr. Pasqua's crackdown. The military-backed Algerian authorities banned the group and cancelled a general election in 1992 that the FIS was poised to win, triggering political violence in Algeria in which more than 4,000 people have been killed.

Mr. Pasqua told Le Figaro the widespread identity checks he had ordered were not directly linked to the Algerian attack but defended them as a "classic security measure."

Foreign Minister Alain Juppe endorsed Mr. Pasqua's handling of the police action but denied that France unconditionally supported the military-backed Algerian government and urged Algiers to return the country to democracy as soon as possible.

Mr. Pasqua has repeatedly dismissed international pressure on Algiers to reach out to moderate Muslims in search of a political settlement, arguing that France's only choice was to support an

admittedly undemocratic government or see Algeria fall into the hands of extremists.

In its demands issued Friday, the Armed Islamic Group demanded that all French nationals leave Algeria.

"France has committed great and vicious crimes against the Muslim Algerian nation," said the statement published on the front page of the London-based, Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat.

The group said it has "confirmed information that elements in the French government were pressuring the ruthless tyrant (Algerian government) to carry out massacres against unarmed innocent people."

The Armed Islamic Group said twice before it had challenged France once by kidnapping then freeing three French diplomats and a second time when the Frenchmen were killed last week.

It set a list of six demands, calling it "the third challenge."

— The French government should uncover those allegedly involved with the Algerian government's crackdown on fundamentalists in Algeria.

— Pay half the compensation to Muslims who have suffered since the crackdown began in Algeria.

— Stop supporting the Algiers government and espouse neutrality in the Algerian conflict.

— Evacuate all French nationals from Algeria until the group allows their return under the Islamic Sharia law.

— Payment of Jizyah, or tax Islamic Sharia law imposes on non-Muslims living under a Muslim system, to the Armed Islamic Group.

— Safeguard the rights and dignity of Muslims in France. If the demands were not met, the group said, it will "strike forcefully at French interests in Algeria," according to Al Hayat.

Prince Hassan in Ma'an

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Crown Prince Hassan is expected to visit Ma'an during a visit he paid to the southern town on Friday. The Crown Prince was given a tumultuous welcome by the town residents of Ma'an headed by Parliament members. The visit was part of a tour that the Crown Prince has been paying to the southern regions last week (see page three).



Argentina distances itself from alleged informer as Iran launches fresh tirade

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies) — Argentina distanced itself Friday from its sole witness linking Iran to an anti-Jewish attack, saying he had now suddenly turned up at the Argentine embassy in Ecuador but that it saw no need for contact with him.

"I don't know for a fact that this gentleman has asked for refuge in Argentina. Such a request would not make much sense," Vice Foreign Minister Fernando Petrella told local radio.

"As far as the (Argentine) Foreign Ministry is concerned I don't think any contact with the defector is necessary."

Manoucher Motamer, from Iran, is Argentina's only witness linking four Iranian officials to the July 18 truck-bombing of Jewish officials that killed nearly 100 people.

Relations between Argentina and Iran are at breaking point after an Argentine judge ordered an international manhunt for the four, who were fingered by Motamer when he was in Venezuela.

Iran summoned the Argentine charge d'affaires to the Foreign Ministry Friday for the third consecutive day over charges of Iranian involvement in the bomb attack, the official news agency IRNA said.

"He (the diplomat) is apparently here. I cannot give more information," a foreign ministry official told Reuters by telephone from Tehran. He gave no other details.

President Carlos Menem has threatened to kick out Iran's ambassador to Argentina and Foreign Minister Guido di Tella says Buenos Aires may even demand that Tehran hand over the four.

Motamer's identity and credentials have been disputed by Iran, which denies any involvement in the attack, and by the Venezuelan Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The witness unexpectedly showed up at the Argentine embassy in Ecuador Thursday but only remained on the premises for an hour or so and was now in a hotel in Quito, Mr. Petrella said.

He offered no assistance, saying Motamer was under UNHCR protection.

Iran says Motamer, described by the Argentine judge as a disaffected former secretary in Iran's Ministry of Islamic Guidance, was in fact a shopowner in the city of Isfahan.

The UNHCR office in Venezuela, which was processing an asylum request by Motamer, said in a statement this week his identity and credentials were doubtful.

The Argentine supreme court was meeting again Friday after failing to agree in an all-day session Thursday on whether it should take over the case from investigating Judge Juan Jose Galeano, who issued the warrants for the four Iranians.

The supreme court is the only tribunal empowered to deal with cases involving foreign diplomats under the Argentine constitution. It must decide whether Mr. Galeano has enough of a case to warrant the top tribunal becoming involved.

Mr. Galeano's preliminary findings, published Tuesday, also mentioned current members of Iran's Buenos Aires mission as suspects, singling out Cultural Attache Mohsen Rabbani as having inquired in recent months about prices of vans like the one used in last month's attack.

Mr. Rabbani has acknowledged visiting used-car dealerships but says this does not link him in any way to what he describes as a criminal attack.

Meanwhile Paraguayan police have arrested a Lebanese national in connection with the bombing, officials said.

They added that there could be more arrests with the next 24 hours.

Police burst into the Arab-run Jebel Centre in this Paraguayan city near the Igazu Falls, bordering Brazil and Argentina, and arrested 32-year-old Alkan Farad.

Farad has been living in Paraguay for two years and is wanted in Lebanon on swindling and check-bouncing charges, said Police Commissioner Domingo Ruiz Diaz of Interpol.

Investigating judges Carlos Monges and Hector Samaniego suggested there was evidence Farad may be linked to other crimes here and in

Argentina.

Iranian officials meanwhile intensified a campaign to discredit the Iranian informer.

A senior Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Emami Kashani, declared that Argentina had been "trapped" into blaming Iran for the bombing because of false testimony from Motamer, who he said was a disenchanted Iranian refugee.

"Is it correct that you talk to a fugitive, liar and charlatan, claiming to have worked for some Iranian ministry and then blame that explosion on Iran?" Ayatollah Kashani said during a weekly prayer sermon at Tehran University.

"Is this not being trapped?" he asked in the sermon, broadcast by Tehran radio.

"Without even considering this person's background, without seeing whether he's an enemy of the Islamic revolution, that he's a liar and a charlatan, you talk to him and come and accuse us," Ayatollah Kashani said.

"How ugly this world has become," he lamented, amid cries of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" from worshippers.

Ayatollah Kashani was the first Tehran official to describe Motamer, an Iranian dissident living in Venezuela, as a fugitive, indicating he was wanted by Iranian authorities. But he did not elaborate.

Motamer has claimed he was deputy minister in the Iranian government.

COLUMN

U.S. veterans at last authorised to parachute

PARIS (AFP) — Five U.S. army veterans have been given permission to parachute over the Mediterranean Monday on the 50th anniversary of the World War II allied landings on the southern French coast, the Defence Department announced here. "The Ministry of Defence has suggested that the five veterans take part in a parachute drop into the sea, which will take place in the Bay of Calais, Aug. 15, in tribute to French troops in the army of De Gaulle," the ministry said in a communiqué. The Bay of Calais is located west of the southern port city of Toulon. General Jean de Latouche de Tassigny commanded French North African troops in World War II. The ministry decision was intended to assuage the anger of the veterans who for security reasons had been refused permission to jump over the village of La Motte, the first community liberated from German occupation by allied troops 50 years ago next week. The five veterans were part of the 50th infantry-paratrooper battalion that landed near La Motte, behind German lines. French President Francois Mitterrand Sunday will launch a two-day commemoration of the Provence landings in which several heads of state, 130 planes and 33 warships from allied forces will take part.

Clinton requests dismissal of lawsuit

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AFP) — President Bill Clinton filed a motion Wednesday in federal court to dismiss a former employer's sexual harassment lawsuit against him, pleading his presidential immunity. The request filed by Mr. Clinton's lawyers stated that Paula Corbin Jones could leave her lawsuit after he leaves office. Ms. Jones claims that Mr. Clinton made sexual advances to her in a hotel room in 1991 when he was governor of Arkansas and she was a state employee working on a business promotion meeting. A memorandum filed in support of the motion to dismiss stated that "there is an overriding national interest in insulating the presidency from the distractions of private civil litigation, and in assuring that courts do not unduly intrude upon the functioning of the chief executive." The memo cites a Supreme Court ruling in 1982 that gave President Richard Nixon immunity from civil suits.

Women pay price for ignoring

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian woman who did nothing after her husband's car crashed into a building paid the price when the dog chewed off both her arms. The Moscow Komzets newspaper said Friday. The dog turned on the 45-year-old woman in a park and bit her 59 times. "There was little left of her arms apart from bones," the newspaper quoted doctors as saying. The woman has been in hospital for the last two weeks in critical condition. The dog was shot the day after the attack. Her husband was still in hospital after the dog bit him in mid-July.

Section of Berlin Wall becomes monument in Germany

LISBON (AFP) — A slab of the Berlin Wall is to become a monument in the Fatima Sanctuary in memory of the unification of Germany, a spokesman for the sanctuary said Wednesday. The cult of Our Lady of Fatima is a religious organisation based on an apparition of the Virgin Mary to three shepherds in 1917. The slab of the wall, which is 3.6 metres (12 feet) high and weighs 2,600 kilograms (5,720 pounds) was offered by former East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere in 1990 on the request of a Portuguese resident in the German city of Kaiserslautern. The inauguration will take place Saturday, the 33rd anniversary of the construction of the wall.

Israeli police warn PLO counterparts

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem police said Friday they are investigating whether Palestinian police made arrests in Jerusalem after a Muslim-Christian brawl in the Old City.

They warned that Palestinian officers from the self-rule areas of Gaza or Jericho could be detained for overstepping their authority.

"Any police other than the Jerusalem police are illegal and banned by law," said police spokesman Shmuel Ben Rubi.

"Whoever identifies themselves as another kind of police with no legal authority granted by us will be arrested and prosecuted," he said.

The latest reports indicate Palestinian undercover units took suspects to Jericho for questioning following a series of Muslim-Christian clashes after a wedding in the walled Old City.

Israel is attempting to block any attempts by the Palestinians to operate branches of the self-rule government in Jerusalem to gain leverage in future negotiations over the city. Israel arrested six Palestinians who were attempting to police the Old City in June, charging them with burglary and assault.

Palestinian residents familiar with the latest incident said it erupted three weeks ago when members of the Abu Assab family in the Muslim quarter tried to get into a Christian wedding without invitations. They tried to force themselves in and four people were wounded in the ensuing brawl.

Some of the Muslims then went into the Christian quarter and beat up residents. The Israeli police made about 50 arrests and released everyone on bail, said the Palestinians, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

They said there was an initial reconciliation organised by community leaders, but the Muslims and Christians did not agree on a permanent settlement.

Hamas claims Jerusalem attack

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) claimed responsibility for an attack on Friday in which three Israeli policemen were wounded in Arab East Jerusalem.

"A number of our fighters attacked one of the military posts of the Israeli army near Sheikh Jarrah (neighbourhood) and opened fire on three policemen," Izzeddine Al Qassam, Hamas' military wing, said in a statement faxed to an international news agency.

"This blessed operation comes to stress the Muslimness of occupied Jerusalem and to stress to all sides of the conflict in the area that this Holy City was and shall always remain Muslim," the statement said.

"The Palestinian flag will fly over Jerusalem for all the world to see," the statement pledged.

Police chief Assaf Hefetz told Israeli radio the group had been preparing an attack.

Israeli police said two full-time officers and a volunteer were shot and wounded when someone in a car they had stopped near the Old City of Jerusalem sprayed them with automatic weapons fire. Police returned fire at the fleeing car.

Police later found the bullet-riddled car abandoned in East Jerusalem. Inside was a seriously wounded Arab youth.

Magazines for two automatic rifles and cartridges were found in the car, police said.

Israel's army radio said police were searching for three other people thought to have been in the car.

At one stage heavily armed police and paramilitary police cordoned off an East Jerusalem neighbourhood thinking they had trapped the suspects but the cordon was eventually lifted.

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS IN BRIEF

European firms sign Gaza port deal

AMSTERDAM (R) — A consortium of European firms on Friday signed a deal with the Palestinian National Authority to build a harbour in the Gaza Strip provided it is funded by their governments, the Dutch consortium leader said. The deal also involves France's Spie Batignolles and Italy's Sistem Ingegneria Spa. Construction of the harbour will only go ahead if full financing for the \$60 million project is provided by the Dutch, French and Italian governments, consortium leader Ballast Nedam NV said in a statement. The Dutch government has promised 40 per cent of the financing on condition that the remainder can also be raised. "The harbour is viewed as of great importance to the development of the Gaza Strip," said Mr. Ballast, which had said earlier this week it hoped to sign the accord. The harbour will be laid in a shallow coastal zone a few kilometres south of Gaza. It will initially be able to accommodate small ships of up to 5,000 gross tonnes and can be extended in a later phase to handle 15,000-tonne vessels. German construction group Hochtief AG owns a 48 per cent stake in the Dutch company.

UAE leader gives Egypt \$7.4 million

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan has donated seven million dollars to medical and scientific centres in Egypt, the official news agency WAM reported Friday. The sum covered heart, kidney, liver and cancer centres as well as the Alexandria and Al Azhar universities, it said in a report from Alexandria in northern Egypt, where the 77-year-old leader ended a visit on Friday. Another \$400,000 were extended to an institute for the blind in Cairo, it said. The UAE, a key oil producer, is a major Arab aid donor. It has promised to contribute to a multi-billion-dollar Gulf development fund to provide aid to Egypt, Syria and other Arab countries. Sheikh Zayed discussed his country's contribution in talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, according to Egypt's official news agency MENA.

Filali says OAU is a fiction

RABAT (R) — Moroccan Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali said the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is a fiction incapable of solving African problems like the civil wars in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia and Angola. The OAU had "done nothing, made no proposals to solve these problems," Mr. Filali told interviewers on the state TV network RTM on Thursday night. "The OAU does not exist. It is a fiction," he said. Morocco has rejected suggestions that OAU representatives monitor a referendum in Western Sahara which the United Nations hopes to hold next February to decide whether the former Spanish colony will be part of Morocco or an independent state. Morocco walked out of the OAU in November 1984 when the self-styled Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) proclaimed by guerrillas was made a member of the organisation. Since then it has maintained that the OAU has no role to play in Western Sahara because it is not impartial since it has taken the guerrillas' side against Morocco. Mr. Filali, who is also foreign minister, said he believed Polisario guerrillas fighting for independence of the territory since 1976 did not want a referendum and were trying to scuttle the U.N. plan by seeking to impose the OAU in the peace process.

Morocco offers cheap plant sites

RABAT (R) — Cheap factory sites on 1,200 hectares are to be made available to new investors in Morocco, the official news agency MAP reported on Friday. The agency quoted Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali as saying in a TV interview on Thursday night that the sites equipped with utilities would be made available at between 250 and 300 dirhams (\$28 and \$33) a square metre. This is less than a tenth of the current going price for land in the industrial quarters of Casablanca where most of the country's factories are concentrated. Mr. Filali said the decision was taken after consultations with the businessmen's association (CGEM), which complained that production costs were heavily penalised by exorbitant land prices.

Three beheaded in S. Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — A Saudi Arabian convicted of murder, and two Pakistanis who tried to smuggle drugs hidden in their intestines were beheaded Friday, the interior ministry announced. The Saudi, Yehya Ben Ali Al Mawardi, was found guilty by an Islamic Sharia court of shooting to death another Saudi in a dispute, the announcement said. He was beheaded in Abha in the southwestern province of Asir. The Pakistanis — identified as Ursul Khan Mialli Khan and Akhtar Mohammad Sultan Jamal — were beheaded in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, the announcement said. Saudi Arabia rules by Islamic law, which prescribes beheading for convicted criminals. That was extended to drug smugglers in 1987 in a ruling by the kingdom's Muslim theologians. Some 90 beheadings were carried out last year and so far this year, nearly 20 people have been executed. The executions are carried out in public squares outside mosques following noon prayers on Friday.

Most Israelis want Arabic in school

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Most Israelis want Arabic taught in school as a compulsory subject because of the progress toward peace in the Middle East, according to a survey published Friday. The poll in Yediot Aharonot newspaper found that 66 per cent were in favour and 34 per cent against. Arabic is an official language in Israel, along with Hebrew. But it is taught in secondary school only as an optional subject, unlike English which is compulsory. According to the same poll, more than one million Israelis out of a population of 5.2 million would want to visit Jordan once the border was opened. Thirty-five per cent of the 600 Jews questioned said they would visit. A first crossing point between the two countries was opened on Monday, initially only for foreign tourists.

Wanted... snakes

SIR BANI YAS, the United Arab Emirates (AFP) — Hunting for snakes on the tiny Gulf island of Sir Bani Yas can be a lucrative business, bringing rewards of up to 110 dollars a piece. Workers on the island, the largest nature reserve in the region, have been told they would be rewarded for every snake they kill. The rewards offered by United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan range between 200 and 400 dirhams (\$55-\$110), depending on the size of the reptile. "The rewards are intended to protect the animals in the reserve so they will continue to increase," said a worker on the island.